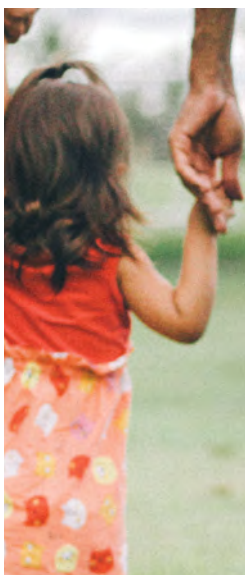




# Fighting *for* Justice

COMMUNITY REPORT  
FOR FISCAL YEAR

# 2019



Community  
Legal Aid

# Dear Friends & Supporters,

As I sat down to write this letter in March of 2020 to introduce Community Legal Aid's 2019 annual report, our world was rapidly and radically changing. Despite the uncertainties of the future, we are proud of CLA's impact over the past year, and we want to thank the donors and partners who supported our fight for justice for all.

In 2019, CLA expanded its work creatively and proactively across the five counties of Central and Western Massachusetts. Our dedicated staff and pro bono volunteers provided a comprehensive range of free civil legal services to individuals who could not afford to hire a private attorney. These are the same people who are likely to be among those most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, and our work this year will be even more important.

In this report, stories of our clients will give you a sense of the impact we have on people's lives and will show you how we continue to reach those most in need.

Despite our efforts, our clients still face major obstacles in obtaining

and keeping housing, and over 40% of the cases we handled in 2019 were geared toward avoiding homelessness. Workers still struggle to receive the wages to which they are entitled and to put food on the table for their families. We have seen a jump in the number of clients seeking our subsidiary's help with humanitarian-based immigration cases as immigrants and refugees continue to encounter new and changing immigration policies.

Your commitment and continued support motivate us to keep working harder than ever for our clients. We live in historic times and face unprecedented challenges. We are grateful that in the midst of this uncertainty, you are part of our fight for justice for all. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Mannina, Esq.  
Executive Director

## IN FY 2019 WE HANDLED:

7,040

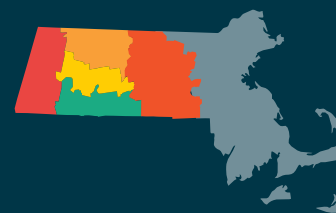
CASES, IMPACTING AN ESTIMATED:

17,600

OF THE MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS  
OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN  
MASSACHUSETTS LIVING IN:

161

CITIES AND TOWNS IN  
MASSACHUSETTS



## Report Contents

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- 32 Financials



New logo...same commitment to justice. You may have noticed that we have respectfully retired CLA's former logo and are starting off the new decade with a new look.

# 2019 in Numbers

## CASES HANDLED

7,040

Total Cases

5,012

Total # CLA cases

2,028

Total # CWJC cases\*

## AREAS OF LAW



- 3,044 Housing/preventing homelessness
- 269 Helping Veterans
- 1,173 Working towards citizenship
- 110 Keeping kids in school
- 1,010 Maximizing incomes
- 86 Re-entry after incarceration
- 931 Keeping families safe
- 84 Employment

## POPULATION SERVED

### INCOME

78% Up to 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines\*

17% Between 125% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines\*\*

5% Over 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

Federal Poverty Guidelines  
 \*125%: Pre-tax annual income of \$15,613 for an individual or \$32,188 for a family of four.  
 \*\*200%: Pre-tax annual income of \$24,980 for an individual or \$51,500 for a family of four.

### AGE

20% Over 60 years

76% 19-59 yrs

4% Under 19 yrs

### GENDER

70% Female identified

30% Male identified

### ETHNICITY



- 40% White
- 37% Hispanic
- 12% Black
- 9% Other
- 2% Asian

## New Office in Fitchburg

On June 12, 2019, CLA welcomed members of the community, government representatives, non-profit groups, and local attorneys to an Open House celebrating its newly opened office at 515 Main Street, Fitchburg.



### CLIENT CASE

#### Sarah's Story

Our expanded presence in northern Worcester County is enabling us to help local residents like "Sarah," who came to CLA disillusioned and without any trust in the court process. For four years, Sarah was forced to share legal and physical custody with the father of her child who had been abusive toward her. A CLA advocate succeeded in modifying the existing custody and parenting order. Sarah was granted sole legal and physical custody of the child, with contact between the father and child allowed only when he provides proof of completion of a court-required anger management program. Following the hearing, Sarah thanked her CLA lawyer for "restoring [her] faith" in the legal system.

Fitchburg's Mayor, Stephen L. DiNatale, applauded CLA's work on behalf of low-income and elderly residents, and presented an official citation of congratulations from the city.

With this new office, CLA aims to increase access to vital legal assistance for residents of North Central Massachusetts.

### PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

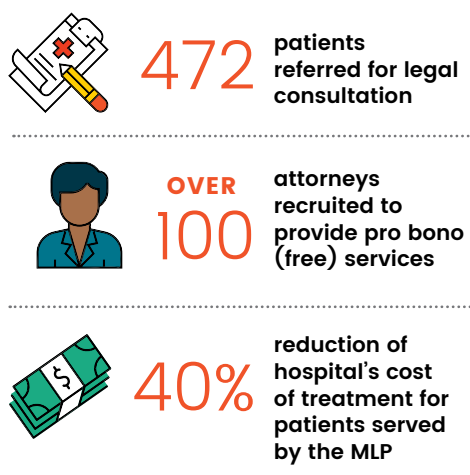
Helping to amplify CLA's ability to assist residents in the region is a generous grant awarded by the **Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts**. This grant provides funding to help increase awareness of the civil legal services available to the area's most vulnerable, at-risk individuals. Within the first six months of opening the Fitchburg office, CLA delivered several Know-Your-Rights trainings for low-income and elderly residents, including sessions on special education transition law, housing rights, and domestic violence and its impact on immigration status.

# Medical–Legal Partnerships

**M**edical–Legal Partnerships (MLP) are innovative, life–altering collaborations between the medical and legal communities. Under the MLP model, a case begins when a medical practitioner believes that a patient’s medical issues may be improved or resolved by legal advocacy. CLA’s MLP staff then refer the case to a CLA Staff Attorney or a volunteer lawyer to provide legal assistance to the client. Community Legal Aid now operates three MLPs:

**UMass Memorial Health Care, Worcester:** Since this partnership began in 2015, the UMass MLP has assisted hundreds of pediatric and adult patients with legal needs related to special education, public benefits, housing, and guardianship.

**UMASS MLP SINCE 2015**



MLPs are innovative, life–altering collaborations between the medical and legal communities.

**Baystate Health, Springfield:** With funding provided by the Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General in 2018, CLA began partnering with the BeHealthy Partnership Accountable Care Organization, which is comprised of Baystate Health Care Alliance and Health New England.

**Northampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC):** Thanks to a three–year grant from the United Way of Hampshire County, a CLA Staff Attorney does intake at the VAMC and works to address the unmet health–harming needs of veterans in the Hampshire County area, which may include obtaining discharge status upgrades, housing, healthcare, and benefits.

**CLIENT CASE**

*Sam's Story*

*Sam uses the gender neutral pronouns "they/them."*

During Sam Nguyen’s service in the U.S. Navy, they survived a number of traumatic incidents that have had permanent repercussions. After becoming unemployed due to health issues stemming from PTSD, Sam and partner Juliana fell behind on mortgage payments and became at risk of losing their shared home.

Sam turned to the Northampton VA Medical Center for help, and thanks to our Veterans MLP, was connected with CLA Attorney Dan Bahls.

Before Attorney Bahls stepped in to help, the mortgage lender had told Sam and Juliana that the only option was to sell their home—a home that meant so much to them and was essential to their family’s stability.

Attorney Bahls knew that Sam was eligible for compensation for the service–connected disabilities that led to job loss, and began the long application and approval process on Sam’s behalf.

Community Legal Aid contacted the lender and assisted Sam in modifying the loan to bring the monthly payment within their means. Once the modification became permanent, the monthly payment was affordable and Sam and Juliana were able to keep their family home.



# Providing Clients with Housing Stability



## CLIENT CASE

### Joy's Home

Community Legal Aid represented "Joy," a single mother of two young children living in Fitchburg. Joy's apartment had several major issues, including a lack of heat, a sewage leak in the basement, unsafe and defective floors, a large quantity of trash around the building, lead paint, mold, water damage in the bathroom, scalding water temperatures, and exposed wiring. These conditions substantially limited the family's use of the apartment. After Joy's requests to her landlord to fix these problems were ignored, she began withholding a portion of her rent and contacted the board of health. Instead of fixing the problems, Joy's landlord began eviction proceedings against her in Housing Court.

Lawyers from CLA's Housing Unit stepped in on Joy's behalf and defended her against the eviction. Following a trial, the judge found that the landlord's refusal to make repairs was willful and reckless in violation of state law, awarded Joy triple damages, and required the landlord to pay for her attorneys' fees. The landlord appealed and the Appeals Court issued a decision affirming in all respects the decision of the Housing Court, and also authorized an award of attorneys' fees for CLA's work on the appeal.

**CLA's Housing and Homelessness Unit** provides legal services to help tenants facing eviction, homeless families who need to access the state's Emergency Assistance shelter program, and people trying to get into affordable housing. The Unit also runs a housing discrimination testing and enforcement program.

CLA handled over 3,000 housing-related cases in the last year, reflecting the reality of high rents, unsafe living conditions, and scarce affordable housing for our client communities.



**3,044**  
HOUSING CASES (43%  
OF ALL FY19 CASES)

## THE WORCESTER FAIR HOUSING PROJECT

The Worcester Fair Housing Project is a HUD-funded partnership between Community Legal Aid and the City of Worcester working to combat housing discrimination throughout Worcester County.

The Project, led by Attorney Alyssa Golden, combines direct legal advocacy and community outreach and education to help ensure that tenants in our community are aware of their fair housing rights. Under federal law, it is illegal for a housing provider to discriminate against a tenant or prospective tenant on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (having children in the household), or disability. In addition, Massachusetts law also protects against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, ancestry, veteran status, age, source of income, and receipt of public assistance.

ALYSSA GOLDEN  
FAIR HOUSING  
TESTING COORDINATOR

One of the tools the Project utilizes to investigate housing discrimination complaints is fair housing testing. Testers are neutral investigators gathering information in order for the Project attorneys to determine whether it is more likely than not that there is a discriminatory practice involved in a case. The Project engages in testing based on intakes it receives as well as discriminatory language in advertising, or other information that raises a concern about potential housing discrimination.

Community Legal Aid is proud of this partnership with the City and proud to work to ensure no one is denied a home based on prejudice or discrimination.



# CORI/Re-Entry

Helping formerly incarcerated individuals in Central and Western Massachusetts re-enter society

**C**RIMINAL RECORDS (known in Massachusetts as Criminal Offender Record Information, or “CORI”) can make it hard to find a job or housing and to successfully rejoin society. Even years after people have served their sentence and remained free of further criminal activity, these records follow people and have an impact on their lives. Under Massachusetts law, individuals may ask to seal or expunge their criminal records in order to reduce barriers to housing and employment.

In 2019, Community Legal Aid welcomed Attorney Nina Harrison to spearhead its CORI/Re-entry Project, where she focuses her work on helping formerly incarcerated individuals overcome barriers to housing, employment, and other opportunities in order to reintegrate into society. Attorney Harrison’s position is funded by a two-year Racial Justice Fellowship awarded by the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC).

Helping formerly incarcerated people re-enter society and attain steady work and safe housing is an essential first step in their ability to live safe, stable, and productive lives. Our ability to effectively address these problems goes to the very core of the American belief in offering second chances.

**NINA HARRISON**  
STAFF ATTORNEY

## CLIENT CASE

### James’s Story

An elderly client, “James,” was recently released from jail after nearly 10 years behind bars. While incarcerated he became sober, learned English, and participated in numerous classes and programs. Despite his efforts to improve himself, his application for public housing was denied because of his criminal record. As an aging, recovering addict in need of an organ transplant, he was very concerned about having to live on the street. Attorney Harrison represented him in his hearing with the housing authority and won the appeal, ensuring that James will secure safe, affordable housing.

**THE CENTRAL WEST JUSTICE CENTER,** a wholly-owned subsidiary of Community Legal Aid, provides free legal help to low-income and elderly residents of Central and Western Massachusetts. CWJC’s advocates focus on cases involving humanitarian-based immigration law, employment rights, housing and homelessness issues, and access to public benefits. CWJC also houses the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker and Food Security Projects.

## Central West Justice Center

AN AFFILIATE OF COMMUNITY LEGAL AID



CLAUDIA QUINTERO  
STAFF ATTORNEY FOR THE  
MIGRANT AND SEASONAL  
FARMWORKER PROJECT

Attorney Quintero  
visits farms across  
the state, assessing  
working conditions  
and advising workers  
of their rights.

# Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Project

**T**HE MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKER Project, housed in CLA's affiliate the Central West Justice Center (CWJC), is a statewide project that provides advocacy to farmworkers across the Commonwealth.

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are paid a lower minimum wage than other workers, and many are not entitled to overtime pay. The representation CWJC provides to farmworkers involves issues around immigration matters, employment, housing, family law, access to benefits, and education law.

7,000  
farms in MA.  
1/3 use migrant  
workers.

## CLIENT CASES

**A YOUNG CLIENT FROM GUATEMALA** living in Western Mass. and working on a tobacco farm came to CWJC for help. Attorney Quintero helped her attain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, which lets children under the age of 21 who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by one or both parents obtain lawful status.

**MIGRANT FARMWORKERS** were facing roadblocks in enrolling their children in schools in a particular school district in Hampden County. With swift legal advocacy, Attorney Quintero put the district on notice that failure to enroll the children could result in legal action. As a result, the farmworkers' families were able to enroll their children in school in that district.



## Win for Workers' Rights

CWJC attorneys won an important victory for workers' rights in a case decided by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) in March of 2019, *Arias-Villano v. Chang & Sons Enterprises, Inc.* The case focused on the definition of farming and agriculture, and on whether workers should have received overtime pay.

CWJC's clients were employees at a facility in Franklin County that grows bean sprouts. The employees regularly worked over 40 hours, and sometimes up to 70 hours a week, without overtime pay. Their employer denied them overtime pay on the grounds that state law exempts "laborers engaged in agriculture and farming on a farm" from overtime compensation. CWJC attorneys argued that the employees should have received overtime since they did not work in the growing operations, but worked instead in the processing plant, where they cleaned, inspected, sorted, weighed and packaged the bean sprouts. The SJC ruled the type of work performed by the plaintiffs did not constitute "agriculture and farming," and therefore ruled in favor of the employees, winning the workers the right to overtime pay.

Leticia Medina-Richman, CWJC's Director, noted that "the decision brings clarity about what constitutes fair compensation," and described the decision as a significant victory for workers' rights. CWJC now expects that more workers will have the right to seek overtime pay.



## CLOWES FUND SUPPORTS IMMIGRATION WORK IN WESTERN MA

Thanks to a two-year grant from the Clowes Fund, CWJC is hosting an AmeriCorps member, Sarah Bluestein, for a special position as a case manager devoted to connecting immigrant clients with services that help meet their basic needs. Sarah helps CWJC clients access food, education, utilities, and healthcare resources. Many of the application processes for these resources are complicated and nearly impossible to navigate without assistance.

The Clowes Fund, a family foundation established in 1952, seeks to enhance the common good by encouraging organizations and projects that help to build a just and equitable society; create opportunities for initiative; foster creativity and the growth of knowledge; and promote appreciation of the natural environment.



## Food Security Project

One in nine Massachusetts residents relies on SNAP to help make ends meet. While the majority (75%) are seniors, children, or persons with disabilities, many are working parents or single adults struggling to find consistent, reliable jobs that pay a living wage.

Started in 2015 and housed in the Central West Justice Center, the Worcester County Food Security project is an innovative initiative which tackles food insecurity by representing clients and confronting systemic barriers to ensure easy and full access to the SNAP (food stamps) program. Most recently, the project has been working on creating Hunger Free campuses to address food insecurity among high-need populations enrolled in Massachusetts public colleges and universities. This project is funded

with support from the Worcester County Food Bank.

When Worcester County individuals and families receive the SNAP benefits to which they are entitled, both they and the community feel an immediate positive impact. For every \$1 of SNAP dollars used, \$1.70 stays in the local economy benefiting local merchants and farmers. Bringing over \$1 billion dollars of federal money into the Commonwealth every year, this program has a tremendous financial impact on individuals, families, and our communities.



## CWJC Team

### BOARD OF MANAGERS

**Michael Badger, Esq.**  
Badger Legal Group, Westborough

**Charles R. Casartello Jr., Esq.**  
Pellegrini, Seeley, Ryan & Blakesley PC, Springfield

### STAFF (AS OF SEPT. 30, 2019)

**Leticia Medina-Richman**  
Director

Catherine Ady-Bell

Elizabeth Alfred

Victoria Baratian

Alexandra Bonazoli

Valdir Cabral

Karen Cole

Hannah Eash-Gates

Claudia Folgosa

Marion Hohn

Mary Johnson

Blair Komar

Carrie Love

Amanda Montel

Donna Morelli

Kelly Morgan

Jose Gabriel Otero

Gina Plata-Nino

Claudia Quintero

J. Lizette Richards

Hilary Thrasher

Ellen VanScoyoc

### CLIENT CASE

## Joyce's Story

Joyce is a woman in her early thirties from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite suffering abuse as a child and later at the hands of her daughter's father, Joyce raised her daughter with the help of her mother and attended university.

While in university, Joyce became aware of the rampant corruption of the ruling party of her country. Learning more about her rights, she began to oppose the corruption publicly. In 2015, Joyce attended a rally to protest a proposed change which would allow the president to extend the term of his office. During the protest, Joyce was arrested by government security forces and detained in a windowless, overcrowded cell for thirty days where she was interrogated, beaten, and starved.

Once released, Joyce feared for her life and knew that she had to leave her home country and family in order to be safe. When she reached the United States, she sought asylum. After settling in Berkshire County, Joyce sought support and refuge at the Elizabeth Freeman Center, an agency in Pittsfield for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. The Center's staff referred Joyce to CWJC's Immigration Unit, and Staff Attorney Donna Morelli assisted Joyce with her asylum case. After a hearing where Joyce endured a grueling cross-examination, the immigration judge granted Joyce political asylum, permitting her to stay in the United States.

Joyce no longer lives in fear and is working on bringing her daughter to the United States. She continues to take English classes at the Adult Learning Center and would like to continue her education with the goal of becoming a nurse. Said Attorney Morelli, "Every time I meet with Joyce, I'm struck by her courage, newfound confidence, and humor. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with her."





## CLA's Pro Bono Program

In 2019, Community Legal Aid (CLA) welcomed its new Pro Bono Director, Meredith Palmer, formerly a staff attorney in our family law unit.

In this newly-created position, Meredith works with CLA's Pro Bono Coordinators in Western and Central Massachusetts to expand our already vibrant pro bono programs. These programs promote the delivery of high-quality legal services by volunteer lawyers, law students, paralegals, and other professionals in coordination with CLA attorneys and staff.

The creation of this position underscores CLA's continuing commitment to serve low-income and elderly residents with civil legal needs that CLA otherwise may not have the capacity to address.

CLA's Pro Bono Program offers volunteer opportunities that encompass a wide variety of cases in District, Housing, and Probate & Family Court. We also provide training and mentorship.

Palmer said, "We hope to inspire our local legal communities to apply their talents to help our most vulnerable

neighbors navigate their civil legal issues. I look forward to expanding the reach of CLA's pro bono programs by empowering volunteers to be part of the movement to increase access to justice for all people."

"We hope to inspire our local legal communities to apply their talents to help our most vulnerable neighbors."

ATTORNEY MEREDITH PALMER  
PRO BONO DIRECTOR



### CLIENT CASE

#### Pro Bono Impact

After a visit with a child suffering from a cardiac condition, a seizure disorder, and severe asthma, a pediatrician at UMass Memorial suspected that the child, along with her sibling and mother, lived in poor housing conditions. Since the family lacked financial resources to hire an attorney, the pediatrician referred the child's case to Community Legal Aid's Medical-Legal Partnership, which placed the case with local attorney Rhonda Bachrach. Attorney Bachrach visited the family's home to document multiple violations including unsafe conditions, unusable amenities, and a cockroach infestation. Attorney Bachrach protected the family from retaliation for reporting these concerns, negotiated a \$2,000 rent abatement, and ensured that the family had time to move to stable and affordable housing. Her representation allowed the child's mother to focus on the health needs of her child, while living in a clean and safe environment.

# Pro Bono Honor Roll

We want to thank all of the attorneys who volunteered in the past year for their contributions to improving access to justice for all people.


Marina Abraham	Joseph B. Collins	Jonathan R. Goldsmith
Norma Adler	Brian Consigli	Daniel Gracey
Akosua Agyepong	Joseph R. Conte	John J. Green
Abra C. Allexenberg	Phyllis Cook	Mitchell Greenwald
Katherine E. Amato	Theodore E. Cooledge	Alanda Grice
Katrina Anop	Angelo Corrado	Devon Grierson
Robert A. Antonioni	Caitlin Cournoyer	Michael J. Grilli
Thomas Argenio	Mark D. Cress	Chris Grinnell
Rhonda L. Bachrach	Hyman G. Darling	Susan Grossberg
Amanda Baer	Carolyn G. DePasquale	Elizabeth Guerrero
Andrew Bartholomew	Karyn Ann DeSena	Carmine Gugliotti
David K. Bartley	Marianne Desrosiers	Michael D. Hashim Jr.
Michelle Begley	JulieAnn Dialessi-Lafley	Deirdre Healy
Harris E. Berenson	James F. Donnelly	Hugh D. Heisler
Burton F. Berg	Christa Douaihy	Brigid M. Hennessey
Gerald B. Berg	David Dupont	Richard Herbert
Maureen Booth	Joshua Egler	Holly H. Hines
Erin Bradbury	Michele Engelbrecht	Andrew Hochberg
Lucille B. Brennan	Geoffrey Fay	Joshua Hochberg
Laurel E. Bretta	Michele Feinstein	Maegan Hurley
Terrence Briggs	Joel H. Feldman	Tyler Ingraham
Christine Brosnihan	Carmina Fernandes	Marie T. Jablonski
James Brown	Kenneth Ferris	Kathleen Jackson
Leslie McLellan Brown	Paige Dunmire Firment	Scott Jelescheff
Edward C. Bryant Jr.	Isaac Fleischer	Stephen R. Kaplan
Heather Budrewicz	Christine A. Ford	Julia Wilkins Kay
Jeffrey A. Burstein	Terry M. Ford	Lisa Kent
Colin Caffrey	Kathryn Foster	Kelly Koch
Kathryn Calo	Douglas L. Fox	Eric D. Kornblum
Linda T. Cammuso	Hon. Patrick Fox (Ret.)	Robert W. Kovacs Jr.
Mary Bermudez Camp	Christian Franklin	Stephen N. Krevalin
Jennifer K. Cannon	Matthew Frascella	Robert Kilroy
Edward Carman	Michael A. Frazee	Jonathan LaBonte
Brian Casaceli	Helena S. Friedman	Talia K. Landry
Stephen Chaplin	Hon. David Fuller (Ret.)	Peter Lane
Lance S. Chavin	Robert A. George	Jennifer Lauro
David R. Chenelle	Tsvetelina Gerova-Wilson	Nicole Reeves Lavallee
Lilian Chinenyenwa Chukwurah	Melissa R. Gillis	Maren Law
Amie Clark	Claudette-Jean Girard	Darren Lee
Bernard S. Cohen	Gerald Glasser	Jacquelyn Lee-Washington
Lawrence E. Cohen	Stella Gnepp	Gina-Marie Letellier
John M. Collins	John R. Gobel	Carl Lindley Jr.

Yifeng Lu  
 Beth A. Lux  
 Jeffrey Lynch  
 Timothy Macri  
 Glynis MacVeety  
 Shaun Mahoney  
 Lauren M. Marcous  
 Thomas Martin  
 Thomas McCormick  
 Samantha P. McDonald  
 John McDonough  
 Nadia R. Totino McGourthy  
 Aminah McKenzie  
 Wendy M. Mead  
 Erin Meehan  
 Norman Michaels  
 Norka Michelen  
 Katherine L. Milligan  
 Douglas Mishkin  
 Carolyn Metzger Mitchell  
 Jonathan Mollere  
 Jason Moore  
 Mark Morisi  
 Matthew Mozian  
 Sheila Mulholland  
 Brian W. Murray  
 Elizabeth Myska  
 Carrie Naatz  
 Lisa M. Neeley  
 AiVi Nguyen  
 David Nickless  
 Patrick Nicoletti  
 Diane L. Nolli  
 Edward A. O'Brien  
 Diane O'Callaghan  
 Andrea O'Connor  
 William Howe Oldach  
 Kathleen O'Malley  
 Craig Ornell  
 Robert Osol  
 David W. Ostrander  
 Jaclyn S. Packard  
 Stephen Pagnotta  
 Mark A. Papirio  
 Carolyne Pereira  
 Neisha Perez  
 Christine Pikula  
 Jeremia Pollard  
 Melissa A. Pomfred  
 Dennis Powers

Vincent P. Pusateri  
 Debora J. Queeney  
 Nancy Ramos  
 Henry B. Raphaelson  
 Justin Raphaelson  
 Kara Rescia  
 Regina Ressin  
 David Enrique Rivera  
 Caroline Robillard  
 Louis S. Robin  
 John L. Roncone  
 Judith Duker Rosenberg  
 Julie Rougeau  
 Benjamin C. Rudolf  
 Mary Samberg  
 David W. Sanborn  
 Howard Sasson  
 Ryan Scambio  
 Matthew Schoen  
 Carolyn E. Scott-Howe  
 G. David Sharp  
 Jennifer Sharrow  
 Christopher Sharry  
 Kerri Shaughnessy  
 John A. Shea  
 Richard Sheils Jr.  
 Jonathan Sigel  
 Alison Silber  
 Elliot S. Silverstein

Stephen A. Smith  
 Amy E. Springstube  
 Bernadette Stark  
 Samuel Stauffer  
 Walter Stowell III  
 Peter Sturgeon  
 Stanley A. Szlachetka  
 Marcia E. Tannenbaum  
 Brian Tessier  
 Danielle Thomason  
 Fred T. Thompson  
 Kathryn Toomey  
 Nathaniel A. Tripp  
 Dorothy Varon  
 Christina Vassallo  
 Judith Vassilowski  
 Diana S. Velez-Harris  
 Carol Vittorioso  
 Reid Wakefield  
 Brian Waller  
 Gary M. Weiner  
 Jeffrey S. Weisser  
 James A. Whitbeck  
 Susan M. Williams  
 Hon. Geoffrey Wilson (Ret.)  
 Thomas N. Wilson  
 James B. Winston  
 Alyson C. Yorlano  
 Lanny M. Zuckerman


### PRO BONO YEAR IN NUMBERS



918

CASES REFERRED TO  
PRO BONO ATTORNEYS


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230

VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS  
donated their time and service  
to help our most vulnerable community  
members meet their legal needs.

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2,923

HOURS OF  
SERVICE

that's a  
value of over  
\$578,575



# Achievements & Awards

- 1 **The Central West Justice Center (CWJC)** was selected by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly as the 2019 winner of the Reginald Heber Smith Award for Excellence in Legal Services. CWJC Immigration Unit Staff Back row: Alexandra Bonazoli, Karen Cole, Kelly Morgan, Donna Morelli, Mary Johnson Front row: Sarah Bluestein (AmeriCorps), Claudia Quintero, Ellen VanScoyoc, Claudia Folgosa
- 2 Elder Services of Worcester Area recognized CLA Senior Paralegal **Dianne Sandman** with the Rosalie Wolf Award which honored Dianne's work in the field of elder abuse prevention. *CWJC was recognized in part for its work assisting evacuees from Puerto Rico after the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria. In 2019 CWJC experienced a record demand for its immigration services and saw a 20% jump in its caseload. For more information and to watch a video describing CWJC's work, visit: [cwjustice.org](http://cwjustice.org).*
- 3 Attorney **Gina Plata-Nino**, the Central West Justice Center's food security expert, was chosen as the recipient of the Massachusetts Bar Association's Rising Star Award, which is given to an attorney who has made a significant and meaningful contribution to access to justice for an underserved population in Massachusetts.
- 4 CLA Staff Attorney **Dana Doyle** was elected President of the Berkshire County Bar Association at the Association's annual meeting held in May. Dana's two-year term began on September 1, 2019.
- 5 In 2019, CLA receptionist **Judith Herberg** celebrated her 50-year anniversary of working for Community Legal Aid and its predecessor agencies, Western Massachusetts Legal Services and Berkshire Legal Services.
- 6 CLA Director of Client Access **Gordon Shaw** was selected by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly for the 2019 Excellence in the Law - Pro Bono Award in recognition of his work overseeing CLA's lawyer-for-the-day programs and Volunteer Lawyers Service activities.



## Dear Friends,

I am writing to thank you for your support of Community Legal Aid and the work it does to ensure access to justice for those most in need.

As President of Community Legal Aid's Board of Directors, I recognize that it takes the collaboration and support of many in our communities to fulfill CLA's mission. Your generous support shows that you recognize this too.

With your involvement, and the involvement of the donors and funders listed on the following pages, you helped provide legal services that impacted an estimated 17,600 individuals in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties. Community Legal Aid assists those struggling with problems relating to life's most basic – and essential – needs including housing, child welfare, education, disability rights, freedom from abuse, employment, and access to stable income.

The impacts of the recent and unprecedented economic and social disruption have fallen particularly heavily on those in our communities most in need of CLA's services. I am proud to tell you that CLA has continued working on behalf of its clients despite the complications imposed by court closures, remote working situations, and social isolation.

Thank you for supporting the work of Community Legal Aid as it strives to make equal justice a reality for low-income and elderly residents of Central and Western Massachusetts.



Sincerely,

Todd Rodman  
President  
Board of Directors

## Access to Justice Campaign Committees

Every year, Community Legal Aid relies on the help of attorneys throughout Central and Western Massachusetts as they ask their friends, colleagues, law firms, and peers to support our work. Our Fiscal Year 2019 Access to Justice Campaign, which began on October 1, 2018 and ran through the spring of 2019, raised over \$124,000 from over 400 attorneys. We are so grateful for our committee chairs and committee members who helped with this campaign. Thank you!

### BERKSHIRE COUNTY

Mark S. Gold, Chair  
Kelsey Bain  
Janice Cook  
Jesse Cook-Dubin  
Angela W. Haylon  
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**Attorney Michele Kunitz** first connected with Community Legal Aid when she began volunteering with our Lawyer for the Day program in the Housing Court. She became a member of our Board of Directors in 2017. Said Attorney Kunitz, “the more I discovered about the organization, the deeper my respect and admiration for the people behind it grew. It is a personal honor to now be among their number and join them in their mission of bringing accessible legal aid to people who encounter the complexities and challenges of our civil courts.” Attorney Kunitz is proud to be part of a community of advocates with a shared commitment to supporting those in need. And it is that spirit that drives her involvement in and philanthropic support of the work of Community Legal Aid.

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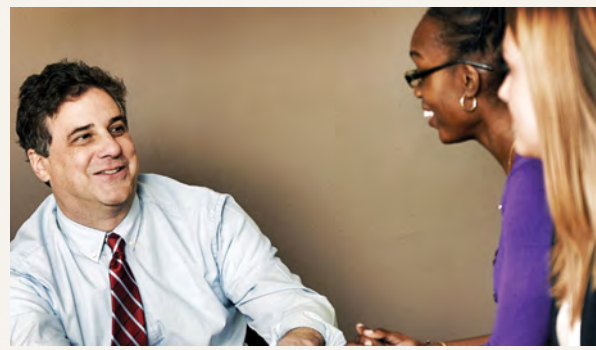
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Law student **Jenny Diggles**, under the supervision of CLA Staff Attorney Amanda Winalski, represented an elderly client, “Carol,” at an administrative hearing appealing the denial of her application for public housing.

Jenny researched the relevant regulations, requested the appeal, developed a defense strategy, and prepared Carol for the hearing. At the hearing, Jenny convincingly articulated the defense argument, explaining that the regulations did not mandate denial, and outlined the mitigating circumstances in Carol’s favor.

Jenny’s hard work paid off: at the hearing Carol told her story credibly and sympathetically. Within 24 hours of the hearing, the housing authority called to let Jenny know that the denial was being overturned and Carol could move into an apartment immediately.



**LEGAL AID CLINIC**

For more than three decades Community Legal Aid and its predecessor organizations have partnered with Western New England University School of Law to help train the next generation of lawyers. Students who enroll in the program attend a weekly Legal Skills Seminar taught by CLA’s Director of Client Access, Gordon Shaw. In addition, students work on cases under the supervision of one of CLA’s staff attorneys. Students in the clinic learn valuable skills and represent clients in one of three areas: General Civil Practice (Family Law, Housing, Education or Benefit Units), veterans’ issues, or Immigration.

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Pictured left to right: Current CLA Board Vice President Doug Brown, Retiring President John Shea, CLA Executive Director Jonathan Mannina, outgoing Board Member Charles Casartello Jr.

### COMMUNITY LEGAL AID THANKS OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

At Community Legal Aid's July 2019 board meeting we expressed our thanks and appreciation to retiring Board President John Shea of Mirick O'Connell and outgoing Board Member Charles Casartello Jr. of Pellegrini Seeley Ryan and Blakesley, who served as Board President from 2014 to 2016.

Over the past several months, we also expressed thanks to dedicated board members whose terms ended this year: Janice Cook of Donovan O'Connor and Dodig; Eric Gouvin, former Dean of Western New England University School of Law; Angelina Stafford of Doherty Wallace Pillsbury & Murphy; and client representative Jeannette Lopez. We appreciate all board members' outstanding dedication to Community Legal Aid and the clients we serve.

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Community Legal Aid and Affiliate Statement of Activities For the Twelve Months Ending September 30, 2019

## REVENUE

Federal Government Grants	\$3,451,740
State & Local	\$6,148,129
Foundation Grants	\$528,052
Private Fundraising	\$170,891
United Way Grants	\$155,136
Attorneys Fees	\$181,056
Other Income	\$200,831
<b>Revenue Before Donated Services</b>	<b>\$10,835,835</b>
Donated Services - Attorneys	\$578,575
<b>Total Revenue After Donated Services</b>	<b>\$11,414,410</b>

## EXPENSES BY LINE-ITEM

Personnel	\$8,441,487
Occupancy	\$650,390
Operations	\$784,561
Sub-grants	\$141,705
Contract Services	\$140,592
<b>Expenses Before Donated Services</b>	<b>\$10,158,735</b>
Donated Services - Attorneys	\$578,575
<b>Total Expenses After Donated Services</b>	<b>\$10,737,310</b>
Change In Net Assets	\$677,100





Community Legal Aid  
405 Main Street  
Worcester, MA 01608

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# Help fight for Justice

Community Legal Aid works to improve the lives of low-income and elderly people through legal assistance that protects fundamental rights, secures access to basic needs, and challenges policies and practices that harm our clients. We work to assure fairness for all in the justice system, protecting homes, livelihoods, health, and families.

**Help Community Legal Aid continue to thrive by making a tax-deductible gift today.**

**GIVE ONLINE:**

[communitylegal.org/donate](http://communitylegal.org/donate)

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