

# Working Together for Justice



# Dear Friends & Supporters,

Looking back on the last year, I am proud of the way Community Legal Aid has strengthened our connections to clients, partners, and community members, as we continued to provide high-quality civil legal services to low-income people and elders in Central and Western Massachusetts.

In 2022, as we emerged from the worst days of the COVID-19 pandemic and adapted to its many consequences, Community Legal Aid responded to a surge in demand in housing, family law, and unemployment cases and expanded our services and advocacy in several other areas. In this report, you will read about new initiatives and collaborations aimed at reaching and engaging with those most in need of our help:

- **Following a significant mobilization and expansion of our housing staff** during the pandemic, we are now participating in statewide projects to stem the wave of evictions and combat pervasive illegal housing discrimination.
- **By expanding the Medical-Legal Partnership model** to additional cities in our service area, we are collaborating with more medical providers to address the civil legal problems that negatively impact their patients' health.
- **The groundbreaking Family Preservation Project** is providing holistic support to families where poverty-related legal problems put children at risk of being removed from their family home.

In these pages, we commemorate the remarkable things we have accomplished together and will continue to achieve in collaboration with our partners and supporters.

While we've celebrated many successes this year, our clients and their communities still face daily challenges. Too often, our neighbors struggle to meet their basic needs when they are facing housing instability or domestic violence or are unfairly denied public benefits or education services. We will continue to advocate for our clients in need and will keep working to combat the policies and practices that harm them.

Essential to this work is the partnership with our supporters, funders, donors, and volunteers. We could not complete the work we do without your steadfast belief that access to justice should not be limited only to those who can afford it. Thank you for being a part of our community.



With deep appreciation,



**Jonathan Mannina, Esq.**  
Executive Director, Community Legal Aid, Inc.

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# 2022 in Numbers

## CASES HANDLED

8,343

Total cases

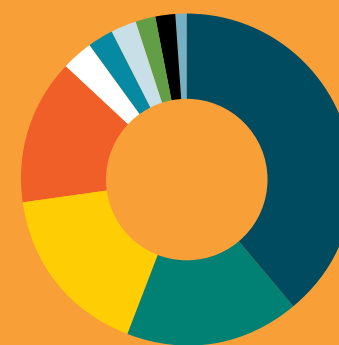
6,225

Total CLA cases

2,118

Total Central West Justice Center cases\*

## AREAS OF PRACTICE



- 39% Housing & preventing homelessness
- 17% Family law services for survivors
- 17% Humanitarian-based immigration (CWJC\*)
- 14% Maximizing income
- 3% Helping veterans
- 2.5% Re-entry after incarceration
- 2.5% Consumer help
- 2% Keeping kids in school
- 2% Health (Medicaid, Medicare, long-term healthcare facilities)
- 1% Other

## POPULATION SERVED

### INCOME

76% Up to 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines<sup>†</sup>

18% Between 125% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

6% Over 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines<sup>‡</sup>

### LANGUAGE

30% Primary language other than English (over 30 languages)

### AGE

21% 60 and older

73% 19-59 years

6% Under 19 years

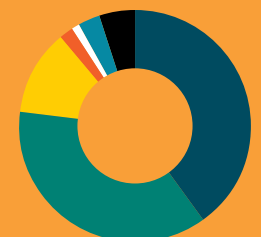
### GENDER

67% Female identified

31% Male identified

2% Gender not identified

### ETHNICITY



- 40% White
- 37% Hispanic
- 12% Black
- 2% Asian
- 1% Bi- or Multiracial
- 3% Other
- 5% Not disclosed

Federal Poverty Guidelines (2022)

<sup>†</sup> 125%: Pre-tax annual income of \$16,988 for an individual or \$34,688 for a family of four

<sup>‡</sup> 200%: Pre-tax annual income of \$27,180 for an individual or \$55,500 for a family of four

\* CLA's wholly-owned subsidiary, the Central West Justice Center (CWJC), receives no funding from the Legal Services Corporation.

# CLA Expands its Housing Advocacy

*New Grants Help Tenants Fight Discrimination and Eviction*



Lynda (left) and Ada (right) with fair housing Attorney Tanya Mamootil

Helping people overcome housing instability is a big part of our work. This year, CLA received new state and federal grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to expand our work to combat evictions and housing discrimination.

CLA appreciates the generous support of its funders and the work of its partner agencies, all of whom recognize and address the struggles that thousands of our neighbors face in obtaining and retaining safe, affordable housing in our communities.

## COMBATING EVICTIONS

Through the DHCD-funded Housing Instability Legal Aid Project and the HUD-funded Eviction Protection Program, CLA and its partners provide legal advice and representation to tenants across Massachusetts involved in the eviction process. Our holistic services also include help with applying for rental assistance.

## COMBATING HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

CLA has operated the Fair Housing Project out of its Worcester office for over 20 years. The Project combines direct legal advocacy and community outreach and education to help ensure that tenants in our community are aware of their fair housing rights. With additional funding provided by HUD, CLA has now expanded this work to Hampden County.

Federal law prohibits a housing provider from discriminating against tenants or prospective tenants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (having children in the household), or disability.

Massachusetts also has a fair housing act, which adds additional protections against discrimination. Even though it is illegal in Massachusetts to refuse to rent to a tenant because they have a housing voucher, tenants with such rental assistance face pervasive discrimination. To

help enforce the Commonwealth's anti-discrimination laws, CLA and three other organizations formed the Fair Housing Alliance of Massachusetts (FHAM) and successfully applied to DHCD for funding. The grant to FHAM from DHCD gives CLA additional resources to ensure that low-income tenants with housing vouchers have equal and fair opportunities in the rental market.

## CLIENT CASE

# Lynda & Ada's Story

Lynda and Ada have lived in their apartments in Chicopee for over 30 years, raising their families, cultivating flower gardens, and building a community with their neighbors.

In 2020, a few months into the pandemic, an out-of-state investor bought their apartment buildings. The new owner began a process of renovating units and negotiating new rents and leases with many of the existing tenants.

However, Lynda and Ada were not given a chance to stay. Instead, the new owner served them with eviction papers.

Lynda and Ada participate in the federal "Section 8" rental voucher program to help them afford their rent. They noticed that other tenants who receive rental assistance were also threatened with being evicted.

When housing advocates at CLA investigated, they found reason to believe that the investor was unlawfully discriminating against tenants with housing vouchers. Now representing Lynda, Ada, and other tenants living at the investor's properties in Western Massachusetts, CLA's housing advocates will seek to raise discrimination claims in the eviction cases and vindicate the rights of Lynda, Ada and others who receive rental assistance.

# Family Preservation Project

*Keeping Families Together*



When CLA launched the Family Preservation Project (FPP) in Hampden County last year, it was the first of its kind in Massachusetts. This project provides legal support to families who are involved with the Department of Children & Families (DCF). The Project's goal is to prevent a child's unnecessary removal from the home. Initially funded by the Court Improvement Program, the Project is being continued with American Rescue Plan Act funding made available by the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation.

The FPP staff works closely with families to prevent DCF from filing a case in court to remove their children. The team

gets client referrals from DCF and then works with DCF to refine and reduce the scope of its concerns, while helping families overcome poverty-related problems such as housing instability and financial insecurity.

The team's approach has a successful track record. In 100% of the cases FPP closed in its first year, no removals occurred. By providing comprehensive stabilization services to families, the FPP approach prevents unnecessary DCF removals, keeps families intact, and avoids the disruption and trauma of even short-term foster care.

The FPP team includes: Senior Supervising Attorney Madeline Weaver Blanchette, who manages the project and provides legal expertise; Case Manager Sophie Chambers, who leads communications with DCF and performs case management; and Parent Advocate Amanda Echeverri, who leads client communications and helps build a trusting relationship with families. Echeverri also attends DCF's home visits to help create a productive atmosphere and make sure that DCF does not overstep its boundaries.

***In 100% of the cases FPP closed in its first year, there were no removals of children from their home.***

## CLIENT CASE

### Joey's Story

One case DCF referred to CLA's Family Preservation Project involved a 5-year-old boy, "Joey." DCF told Joey's mom that if she experienced one more incident of domestic violence perpetrated by Joey's father, Joey would be placed in foster care.

Joey's mom was reluctant to file a restraining order against Joey's father, at least in part because he had court-ordered parenting time and helped her with childcare. Despite encountering initial resistance, the Project's Case Manager, Sophie Chambers, was able to educate the DCF social worker about the complexities of intimate partner violence. Chambers recommended that Joey's mom enroll in domestic violence services at the YWCA and file a no-trespass order against Joey's father.

Eventually, after multiple conversations with the YWCA counselor and the Project's team, Joey's mom decided—on her own volition—to fully separate from Joey's father. The DCF worker then decided not only to forgo acting on her previous threat of removal, but also to close the DCF case.



CLA's Family Preservation Project Team (Left-Right): Attorney Madeline Weaver Blanchette, Sophie Chambers & Amanda Echeverri

# Medical-Legal Partnerships

*Collaborations to Improve Health and Well-Being*



*While Medical Legal Partnerships (MLPs) have recently become increasingly popular around the country, CLA has been successfully utilizing this collaborative model for several years.*

With funding from both public and private sources, CLA has recently expanded from two to six MLPs in its service area. While each MLP targets a specific region and patient group, all play a critical role in reducing the health-harming civil legal problems that impede patients' health and well-being.

In the MLP model, CLA staff train medical providers to spot situations where a patient's medical needs may be addressed by legal advocacy. Those medical providers then refer the patient to our MLP advocate, who identifies the patient's health-harming legal problems and works to resolve them. Our MLP advocates are assisted by other CLA colleagues so we can provide these clients with the full array of our legal expertise.

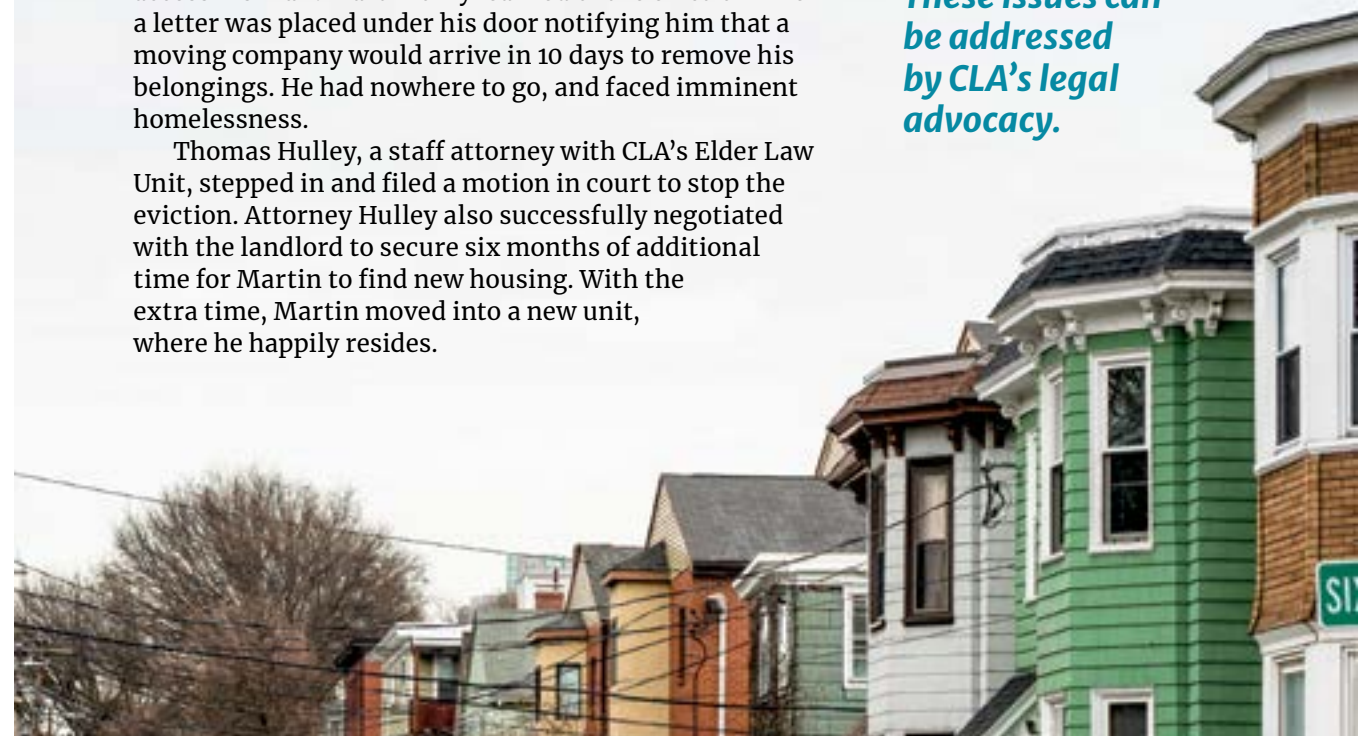
## CLIENT CASE

### Martin's Story

In one case, a doctor at UMass referred a patient, "Martin," suffering from COPD, asthma, and cancer to the MLP for help. Martin had lived in his apartment for 20 years, and his landlord had begun a no-fault eviction case against him. Due to his disabilities, Martin was unable to regularly access his mail. Martin only learned of the eviction when a letter was placed under his door notifying him that a moving company would arrive in 10 days to remove his belongings. He had nowhere to go, and faced imminent homelessness.

Thomas Hulley, a staff attorney with CLA's Elder Law Unit, stepped in and filed a motion in court to stop the eviction. Attorney Hulley also successfully negotiated with the landlord to secure six months of additional time for Martin to find new housing. With the extra time, Martin moved into a new unit, where he happily resides.

*Health-harming legal problems can relate to housing, such as poor conditions or risk of eviction; the need for income supports; or threats of physical violence at home. These issues can be addressed by CLA's legal advocacy.*



## Current Medical-Legal Partnerships

The UMass Memorial Health Care MLP in Worcester has operated since 2015 and assists pediatric and adult patients in Worcester County with legal needs related to special education, public benefits, housing and guardianship.

The Veterans Affairs Medical Center MLP in Northampton launched in 2018 and serves veterans in the Pioneer Valley area. It specifically targets veterans' unmet health-harming needs, including housing, healthcare, veteran-specific benefits, and discharge status upgrades.

The MLP with Commonwealth Care Alliance, Springfield, launched in early 2022. In its first six months, the volume of referrals has surpassed CLA's expectations, with the vast majority of referrals relating to housing issues.

In addition, CLA has coordinated with additional providers to launch new MLPs at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Worcester; Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield; and Community Healthlink, a branch of UMass Memorial.

# CLAVC Initiative

## A Refuge for Victims of Crime

In April, the Civil Legal Aid for Victims of Crime (CLAVC) Initiative received the 2022 Innovation Award from the Victim and Witness Assistance Board and the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance.

Launched in September 2017, the CLAVC Initiative helps victims of crime throughout Massachusetts

with civil legal problems related to the crime and its aftermath—including cases involving family law, housing, immigration, disability rights, child welfare, education, consumer rights, identity theft, employment rights, and public benefits.

CLA is one of nine legal aid organizations providing these services in the state. The CLAVC Initiative is supported by the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance through a Victims of Crime Act grant from the U.S. Department of Justice and administered by the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation and the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute.

Attorney Kay supervises a team of five attorneys and one paralegal stationed in CLA's offices in Northampton, Springfield, Pittsfield, and Worcester who provided legal services to over 600 clients in the last year.



**“CLAVC lawyers give victims a voice, bring victims justice, and stabilize victims’ lives in the often chaotic aftermath of crime.”**

—CATHERINE KAY, Senior Supervising Attorney for Community Legal Aid's CLAVC Unit

### CLIENT CASE

In one case handled by CLA's CLAVC Unit, 83-year-old “Edward” had been the victim of a sophisticated scam in which individuals purporting to be from his internet provider claimed they needed to fix his router. The scammers gained access to Edward's phone, computer, and banking information. After they emptied his bank account, Edward felt

ashamed and discouraged. Although Edward immediately reported the scam to his bank, the bank conducted only a cursory investigation and did not return the funds. Edward sought help from several other sources without success before he was referred to CLA.

CLAVC Staff Attorney Franci Gazzaniga researched the relevant law and consulted our legal aid network of attorneys, the Attorney General's office, and a private attorney. None were optimistic about recovering Edward's money. Undaunted, Attorney Gazzaniga sent the bank a letter outlining the facts of the scam, detailing the bank's failure to follow federal law, and demanding the return of Edward's funds. Ultimately, due to Attorney Gazzaniga's persistent advocacy, the bank returned all of Edward's money. Edward was extremely grateful to be made whole again.

# Education Law

## Fighting for Equity

In 2022, CLA received a two-year American Rescue Plan Act grant from the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation to focus on education law. The funding allows CLA to expand its work to reduce barriers to quality education through individual advocacy for students throughout our five-county service area. Part of a statewide initiative, the grant also permits CLA to network with our education law colleagues around the state to discuss trends and concerns and help CLA and its allies identify issues appropriate for systemic advocacy. CLA will also enhance its outreach with community partners so that we know what education-related issues clients are facing in their local communities.

As a result of the grant, CLA can provide comprehensive and compassionate advocacy on behalf of students like “Ana,” a first grader diagnosed with a rare genetic condition with symptoms nearly identical to those associated with autism. Ana is nonverbal but she is very motivated to learn and communicate. At the beginning of the school year, Ana's school sent her mom a letter stating that Ana would not be receiving speech-language support at school, despite an Individualized Education Program (IEP) mandating two speech-language therapy sessions a week for Ana along with consultation with her classroom teachers. Ana's mom reached out to CLA for help enforcing the IEP.

One of CLA's education law attorneys, Helene Busby, filed a hearing request with the Bureau of Special Education Appeals on Ana's behalf. Within 24 hours of receiving notice of the request, the school district agreed to settle the case. Seeking the best educational placement for her daughter, Ana's mom opted to send Ana to a local private school for students with autism. The district agreed to place Ana in the private school and also to provide compensatory speech-language services to Ana. Without CLA's intervention, Ana would not have received the services she needed and deserved.

The two-year grant allows CLA to expand its advocacy for students.

**The education arena remains one of the most glaring examples of inequity families face in this country. By making education law a priority for our organization, CLA leads the effort in our region to help families and students vindicate their educational rights.**



# Central West Justice Center

AN AFFILIATE OF COMMUNITY LEGAL AID

*The Central West Justice Center, an affiliate of Community Legal Aid, houses the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Project, a state-wide program that provides services to the state's low income agricultural and migrant laborers.*



Teen Artist Diego V. is the child of migrant farmworkers in Massachusetts and created this art to promote the Fairness for Farmworkers Act. CWJC is part of the Fairness for Farmworkers Coalition, and has continued to advocate for the Act.

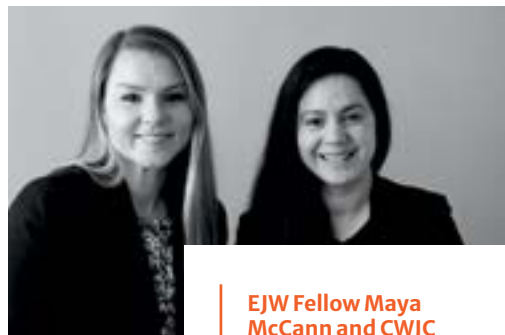
## CWJC Launches New Farmworker MLP

Led by Attorney Claudia Quintero working in our Springfield office, the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Project received a significant enhancement with the addition of Attorney Maya McCann.

A graduate of Northeastern University School of Law, McCann is a 2022 recipient of an Equal Justice Works Fellowship sponsored by Fidelity Investments and Mintz. One of the most prestigious and competitive post-graduate legal fellowships in the country, the two-year Fellowship pairs aspiring public interest lawyers with legal services organizations.

For her Fellowship project at CWJC, McCann is launching the state's first Farmworker Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP). Established with the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program, this MLP will provide holistic care and advocacy to farmworkers in western Massachusetts. In addition to providing advice and consultation on site at the farmworker medical clinic during weekly office hours, Attorney McCann will provide full representation to clients in housing, benefits, and employment matters. She will also conduct outreach to educate farmworkers on the rights and resources available to them.

In addition to enduring hazardous labor, farmworkers are more likely to live in severe poverty and often struggle with housing instability, poor living conditions, food insecurity, and other challenges. This Farmworker MLP seeks to address farmworkers' unmet legal needs to improve the health and well-being of farmworkers and their communities.



EJW Fellow Maya McCann and CWJC Attorney Claudia Quintero

### CLIENT CASE

## Hipatia's Story

"Hipatia" and her husband, both over 60 years old, lived near Springfield close to the large farm where her husband was a farmworker.

When Hipatia's husband was diagnosed with cancer, he became too sick to work. As Hipatia is blind and was also not able to work, they fell into debt paying for their basic needs. Shortly after Hipatia's husband passed away, her apartment building caught fire and was condemned, leaving Hipatia homeless. Hipatia was then diagnosed with a rare illness that, along with her grief, debt, and stress from being homeless, worsened her overall health.

Hipatia came to the Farmworker MLP while she was living in a rehabilitation facility. Attorney McCann first helped Hipatia communicate with her landlord and get her belongings removed from her vacant apartment, which had been robbed and vandalized after the fire. Securing her belongings helped give Hipatia peace of mind and restore her sense of control. Attorney McCann then helped her navigate

the insurance process, connect with case managers, apply for priority status in her housing applications, and understand her eligibility for government benefits programs. Attorney McCann also worked on a reasonable accommodation request to allow Hipatia to have a guide dog with her in the facility.

**"Hipatia's situation shows the extreme vulnerability of farmworker families, the connection between social factors and health, and the value of holistic legal advocacy to stabilize and empower our clients."**

-ATTORNEY MAYA MCCANN



# Relief for Those Seeking Safe Haven

*CWJC's Immigration Unit helps individuals applying for humanitarian-based relief, including asylum for those seeking protection from persecution in their home countries. Yvette, who fled Cameroon because of the violence she suffered there for being a teacher during a civil war, tells the story in her own words.*



Attorney Caroline Foley worked with Yvette to prove her need for asylum to the Immigration Court.

CLIENT CASE

## Yvette's Story

"My name is Yvette. I was born and grew up in Bamenda, Cameroon. When I married, I moved to Wum. Both of these areas are in the English-speaking side of Cameroon. Most of the country speaks French.

The Cameroon government, run by those who speak French, discriminated against English speakers. The English speakers did not get a fair share of government resources. We had terrible roads, bad hospitals, and no job opportunities.

A few years after getting married, I completed a teacher training course and began teaching. Shortly after I started my teaching job, peaceful protests organized by lawyers and teachers took place in the English-speaking areas of Cameroon. The government responded to the protests with the force of the military. In turn, people from my region, known as 'separatists,' picked up arms against the government. My mostly peaceful area became engulfed in violence. Although I was not involved in the protests or connected to the separatists in any way, my life changed. Over the next few years, my family and I, along with my students, their parents, and other teachers, lived in constant fear.

To put pressure on the government, the separatists wanted to keep schools closed. When the government forced the schools to reopen, I was put in a terrible position: if I didn't teach, I would be arrested by the government and if I did teach, I would be punished by the separatists.



CWJC immigration client Yvette

Over the next three years, I was threatened, shot at, and kidnapped by separatists. I feared for my own life and for my husband and two daughters. Eventually I stopped teaching.

Then the military came for me. I was not home, and my husband was beaten so badly he spent several days hospitalized. I then learned from a family member that I was on the military's 'wanted list,' and I was not safe anywhere in the country. Now a target of both the military and the separatists, I knew my life was in danger. When I left my young children and fled the country, it was the worst moment of my life.

I eventually made it to the U.S. With the help of Attorney Caroline Foley at the Central West Justice Center, I was able to prove to the Immigration Court that I fear I will be tortured and killed by the separatists or the government if I return to Cameroon. I have been granted asylum and Attorney Foley has filed a family petition to help me bring my husband and daughters here as well. I am looking forward to the day that I can be reunited with my husband and daughters and we can all be safe here."



*On behalf of our client communities, CLA Pro Bono thanks the following attorneys for their service in 2022.*

|                             |                           |                         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Joel A. Abu                 | Nyles Courchesne          | Carmine Gugliotti       |
| <b>Akosua Agyepong</b>      | Paul M. Cranston          | Carla A. Halpern        |
| Lisa M. Alberto             | Kathryn S. Crouss         | Brigid M. Hennessey     |
| <b>Abra C. Allexenberg</b>  | Ann Dargie                | Jon Heyman              |
| Katherine E. Amato          | Hyman G. Darling          | Caitlin Hill            |
| Laura F. Arbeitman          | Diane M. DeGiacomo        | <b>Jamie D. Hoag</b>    |
| Thomas Argenio              | Adam Deutsch              | Brett Hubbard           |
| <b>Barry Bachrach</b>       | Julie Ann Dialessi-Lafley | Maegan Hurley           |
| Rhonda L. Bachrach          | Thomas J. Donahue         | Cristina M. Ianello     |
| James E. Baker              | Christa Douaihy           | Marie T. Jablonski      |
| David K. Bartley            | <b>Ashlyn Dowd</b>        | Kathleen A. Jackson     |
| Michelle Begley             | John W. Drake             | Amanda L. Jordan        |
| Peter Benjamin              | Gillian Szlachetka Dubay  | Lisa Kent               |
| Burton F. Berg              | David Dupont              | Kelly Koch              |
| Gerald B. Berg              | Charles J. Eusey          | Eric D. Kornblum        |
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| Pavel Bepalko               | Joel H. Feldman           | Jonathan Labonte        |
| <b>Daniel Blakesley</b>     | Stephanie Fitzgerald      | Peter T. Lane           |
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| Nicholas Carbone            | Jonathan R. Goldsmith     | Nadia R. McGourthy      |
| Lance S. Chavin             | Lynnette M. Goodnow       | Cherie L. McKenna       |
| David R. Chenelle           | Daniel Goodrich           | <b>Wendy M. Mead</b>    |
| Chelsea Choi                | <b>Michael D. Gorman</b>  | Douglas Mishkin         |
| <b>Lillian Chinenyenwa</b>  | Vaishali Goyal            | Carolyn M. Mitchell     |
| <b>Chukwurah</b>            | John J. Green             | <b>Jonathan Molleur</b> |
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| Lawrence E. Cohen           | Susan Grossberg           | Mark Morisi             |
| Casey Connors               | Elizabeth Guerrero        | Jeffrey Morneau         |

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 Brian W. Murray  
 Elizabeth L. Myska  
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 Carla Newton  
**AiVi Nguyen**  
 Philip D. O'Connell  
 Andrea O'Connor  
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 Elaine O'Donnell  
 Kathleen O'Malley  
 Dan Ordorica  
**Craig Ornell**  
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**Jaclyn Packard**  
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 Michael Pastore  
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 Maria Rivera-Cotto  
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 Barry M. Ryan  
 Hon. David Sacks (Ret.)  
 Mary A. Samberg  
 Ralph W. Sargent  
**Ryan Scambio**  
 Matthew Schoen  
 Carolyn E. Scott-Howe  
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Scott-Howe**

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 Tom G. Vukmirovits  
**Reid Wakefield**  
**James Walckner**  
 Brian Waller  
 Gary M. Weiner  
 Heather-Jill Williams  
 Susan M. Williams  
 Thomas N. Wilson

*Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) volunteers are bolded.*

We are incredibly grateful for the dedication and passion our volunteers show by serving our client communities.



**PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT**

**2022 Volunteer Appreciation Award: Attorney Carolyn E. Scott-Howe**

Attorney Carolyn E. Scott-Howe is one of Community Legal Aid's most long-standing and dedicated volunteer attorneys. Throughout her career, Attorney Scott-Howe has generously volunteered her services in both the Hampden and Hampshire County Probate and Family Courts, as well as in the Western Division of the Housing Court.

A solo practitioner from Chicopee, Attorney Scott-Howe began practicing law 28 years ago and immediately incorporated pro bono work into her practice.

A regular volunteer for such programs as Lawyer for the Day, Guardianship Care Plan Review, and Conciliation, Attorney Scott-Howe also created and implemented the Uncontested Divorce Project (UDP), which serves families with low incomes in the Hampden County Probate and Family Court. Under her leadership, a total of 106 families have secured uncontested divorce judgments since 2011. In addition to her work with the UDP, Attorney Scott-Howe has accepted approximately 56 full representation pro bono referrals from CLA.

CLA is grateful to Attorney Scott-Howe for her commitment to pro bono and to access to justice for all.

# Thank you

“I’ve chosen to support CLA both through my work as a volunteer and with charitable donations because I see the crucial difference that CLA makes, every day, in the lives of our neighbors. In addition to direct representation of the poor and the elderly, CLA has pioneered innovative programs like the Medical–Legal Partnerships, and the state’s first Family Preservation Project—greatly improving the lives of those involved.

**“I want to thank you for all you have done for Community Legal Aid and I urge you to continue your support.”**



Todd Rodman, Esq.  
President, Community  
Legal Aid Board of  
Directors

## Access to Justice Campaign

Every year, Community Legal Aid relies on the help of attorneys throughout Central and Western Massachusetts as they ask their colleagues, law firms, peers, and friends to support our work. Our fiscal year 2022 Access to Justice Campaign, which began on October 1, 2021 and ran through the spring of 2022, raised over \$156,000 from over 400 individuals, law firms, and other businesses. We could not achieve such results without the help of our committee chairs and committee members. We are incredibly grateful for their work on our behalf. All committee members are recognized in bold in the donor list. Thank you to all our volunteers!



Worcester County  
Access to Justice  
Campaign

**LYNETTE PACZKOWSKI, ESQ.**

*“CLA’s work is essential. Every day, staff attorneys, pro bono volunteers, and advocates impact the lives of countless individuals and families in need of support and stability. And yet the need for services is greater than CLA’s capacity to provide those services. Without the support of this campaign and its generous donors, CLA would be forced to turn away even more people in legal crisis when they call for help. I never want a CLA staffer to have to decide which domestic violence victim is in the most immediate danger or which family will become homeless first.”*



Hampden County  
Access to Justice  
Campaign

**MARIA F. RODRIGUEZ, ESQ.**

*“It can be complicated to get access to basic needs such as housing, education, or government benefits and more. Combine this with poverty, lack of transportation, or language issues and it becomes overwhelming.*

*Most of us are not faced with such challenges but for those who are, life is just a series of obstacles. I recognize my privilege, and the responsibility that comes with it. Joining the fundraising committee allows me to spread the word about the exceptional work CLA does and assures they can continue the essential work they do. I am honored to be part of an agency which cares about and responds to human needs. It is what I always wanted to do. It’s what we, as lawyers, CAN do.”*



Hampshire County  
Access to Justice  
Campaign

**JOHN P. DIBARTOLO JR., ESQ.**

*“As a personal injury lawyer, all of my cases are on a contingent fee; that means anyone can retain me without regard to their financial means. Other areas of the law are not amenable to that type of fee structure and the inability to pay means forgoing counsel for legal issues. Lawyers can only devote so many hours to pro bono work.*

*That is where Community Legal Aid steps in; it provides legal help to the folks who can neither afford it nor afford to do without it. I limit my practice to one specific area of law, but that does not mean I limit my compassion for people who are suffering, and volunteering for the CLA campaign is a way for me to help. It is an honor to be associated with the people who do this work.”*

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**Charles ("Charlie") Casartello Jr.** and his wife **Carol Katany-Casartello** are among Community Legal Aid's most stalwart supporters. Charlie has served as a board member in various capacities since 2011, including as the Vice-President and President, and subsequently served on the Board of Managers of our subsidiary, the Central West Justice Center. Charlie has been a member of our Hampden County Access to Justice Campaign since its inception, and he and Carol have hosted events at their home to benefit CLA. Charlie's firm, Pellegrini, Seeley, Ryan & Blakesley, is also a generous donor.

Regarding his long-term involvement with Community Legal Aid, Charlie said, "Both CLA and the Central West Justice Center play a crucial role in ensuring that some of our most vulnerable neighbors have meaningful access to our American justice system. I am proud to support their work."

Carol added, "I am proud of the work that Charlie has done with CLA, and I am proud to join him in supporting it. I worked in and around the Massachusetts legal system for more than thirty-five years. During that time, I recognized the critical nature of what CLA does for people...and the absolute need for the services that CLA provides."

As Charlie prepares to retire from his board service, we want to take this opportunity to thank Charlie and Carol for their loyal support on behalf of CLA and the clients we serve. We are so fortunate to have them on our team, fighting for justice for all.

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**Attorney Stewart ("Buz") Eisenberg** is a former board member of CLA's predecessor organization, Western Mass. Legal Services, and longtime volunteer for CLA's Access to Justice Campaign in Franklin County. Buz said, "CLA changes lives not just of those it represents, but for everyone who wants to live in a community shaped by fairness and caring."

Ashfield attorney Stewart ("Buz") Eisenberg's work as a human rights lawyer has earned him numerous regional, state, and national recognitions. Eisenberg also co-hosts a radio show focused on news, politics, arts, and culture in the Pioneer Valley.

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The 2022 Community Report recognizes donations made between October 1, 2021, and September 30, 2022. If you think your name should have been included, please contact CLA's Development at 413-727-7115 or [donorrelations@cla-ma.org](mailto:donorrelations@cla-ma.org).

# Commemorative Gifts

We are grateful when our supporters make a gift to Community Legal Aid as a tribute to their family, friend, or colleague.

## GIFTS IN HONOR

**In Honor of Marina Abraham, Weayonnoh Nelson-Davies, and the Worcester MLP**  
Kate and Nima Eshghi

**In Honor of Will Poff-Webster and Amna Hashmi**  
Anonymous

**In Honor of Hallie Blashfield**  
Steve Folsom  
Lyn Hanke  
Melissa Marsland

**In Honor of Rachel Shannon Brown**  
Clarissa and Mark Brown

**In Honor of Valdir Cabral**  
Eileen Rakouskas

**In Honor of Paul Carey**  
Unibank for Savings

**In Honor of Charles Casartello Jr.**  
Hon. Philip Contant (Ret.)

**In Honor of Richard W. Dearborn**  
Ann Molloy

**In Honor of Lucy DeLaCour**  
Benjamin Barnes

**In Honor of John DiBartolo Jr.**  
Leonard Jekanowski

**In Honor of Julie Dick**  
Amanda O'Coin

**In Honor of Andrew Felper**  
Benjamin Lewis

**In Honor of Mark Gold**  
Bernard Pinsonnault and Dianne Cutillo

**In Honor of Mary Goodhines**  
James Goodhines

**In Honor of Peter Klein**  
Randi Klein and Scott Barton

**In Honor of Michele Kunitz**  
Selma Kunitz

**In Honor of Jaime Margolis**  
Theresa Lind

**In Honor of Ellen McCarthy**  
James Gregory

**In Honor of Michael**  
Edward Bryant Jr.

**In Honor of Tom Navin**  
Lisa Gurwitch

**In Honor of Tina Paradiso**  
Laura Gal  
Becky Claridge

**In Honor of Irit Tau-Webber**  
Erika Lindberg  
Kristi Kelley

**In Honor of Linda Michel**  
Ruthanne Withers

**In Honor of Neil Petersen Jr.**  
Unibank for Savings

**In Honor of Patti Prunhuber**  
Ruth Elcan

**In Honor of Faye Rachlin**  
Sally Gottesman

**In Honor of Maria Rodriguez-Maleck**  
Anonymous

**In Honor of her colleagues at the Law Offices of Mark E. Salomone**  
Nicole Murray

**In Honor of J. Robert Seder**  
Unibank for Savings

**In Honor of Dorothy Storrow**  
Patricia Crosby

**In Honor of Al Tapper's 80th Birthday**  
Tapper Charitable Foundation  
J. Robert Seder

**In Honor of Molly Jane Thoms**  
Anne Wheelock

**In Honor of Nghia Trinh**  
Merilyn Bambauer

**In Honor of Worcester Vision Fund**  
Amy Stillman

**In Honor of Nathan Zoll**  
Miriam Zoll

## GIFTS IN MEMORIUM

**In Memory of Davis Abbott**  
Jonathan Abbott

**In Memory of Greg Angelini**  
Hon. John McCann (Ret.)

**In Memory of Joseph H. Bennett**  
Elizabeth Greene

**In Memory of Mary L. Boyd**  
Beverly Spring

**In Memory of Ernest Chase**  
Anonymous

**In Memory of Michael Dyer**  
Meghan Korn

**In Memory of Diane Esser**  
Eve Blakeslee

**In Memory of Hon. Thomas Fallon**  
Bailey & Burke

**In Memory of John Fitz-Gibbon**  
Welch Law Offices

**In Memory of Mary Grabowski**  
Donna Agure

**In Memory of Gloria Herbst**  
Phyllis Hanlon

**In Memory of Simone Joyaux**  
Tom Ahern

**In Memory of Abner Juin**  
Salomon Louis

**In Memory of Paul M. Kalill**  
Jeffrey Sagalyn

**In Memory of Jeffrey Luekens**  
Michael and Elizabeth Luekens

**In Memory of Larry O'Connor**  
William Loftus III

**In Memory of Charles W. "Dino" Patronas**  
Edward McIntyre

**In Memory of Hon. James F. Queenan**  
Denise Pappalardo

**In Memory of Antonio (Tony) Rivera**  
Laura Hancock Barry and Daniel Barry

**In Memory of Ralph Rudd**  
Rachel Christensen

**In Memory of Elizabeth Shaw**  
Gordon Shaw and Arlene Correa

# Our Team

## Board of Directors

*As of Sept. 30, 2022*

### PRESIDENT

**Todd Rodman, Esq.**  
Seder & Chandler, LLP

### VICE PRESIDENT

**Michele Kunitz, Esq.**  
Inclusive Prosperity Capital

### TREASURER

**Jodi K. Miller, Esq.**  
Bulkley, Richardson and Gelinias, LLP

### SECRETARY/CLERK

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Client Representative

*Remainder of board members listed alphabetically by last name*

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Client Representative

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Affiliated Monitors, Inc.

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Retired Probate and Family Court Judge

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**Robin A. DeAugustinis, Esq.**  
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Smith Green & Holmes, LLP

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Client Representative

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**Dr. Aladdin J. Naji**  
Client Representative

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Bowditch & Dewey

**Hon. Luis G. Perez (Ret.)**  
Glickman, Sugarman, Kneeland & Gribouski

**Maria F. Rodriguez, Esq.**

**Dorothy Storrow, Esq.**  
Storrow Law Offices

**Dolores Thibault-Muñoz, Esq.**  
Committee for Public Counsel Services

**Guinevere Vanhorne**  
Client Representative

*Community Legal Aid thanks outgoing board members:*

**Shelena Bernard**

**Douglas Brown, Esq.**

**Terrence Briggs, Esq.**

**J. Kendall Huber, Esq.**

**Lyonel Jean-Pierre Jr., Esq.**

**Buffy Duringer Lord, Esq.**

**Sudha Setty, Esq.**

**Members of the CLA board at our summer meeting**



*We appreciate our board members' outstanding dedication to CLA and the clients we serve.*

# CLA Staff

As of Sept. 30, 2022

Jonathan Mannina  
Executive Director

Marina Abraham  
Daniel Bahls  
Brittany Bandani  
Bex Bernocco  
Mariyam Bhatti  
Madeline Weaver Blanchette  
Hallie Blashfield  
Faiza Bokhari  
Colleen Brady  
Yanira Brito  
David Brown  
Rachel Brown  
Helene Busby  
Michelin Cahill  
Elizabeth Campanale  
Sophie Chambers  
Jeanette Colon  
Evelyn Cortez  
Jennifer Cunningham–Minnick  
Sam Davidson–Weiss  
Lauren De Oliveira  
David DeBartolo  
Ines Diaz–Rodriguez  
Julie Dick  
Jennifer Dieringer  
Amy Corbett Dion  
Christa Douaihy  
Amanda Echeverri  
Jane Edmonstone  
Krista Ellis  
Andrew Felper  
Raydi Fonfrias–Soto  
Gabriel Fonseca  
Franci Gazzaniga  
Andrea Gilardi  
Hon. Edward Ginsburg (Ret.)  
Sandra Girardi–Uljua  
Stella Gnepp  
Alyssa Golden  
Carmen Gonzalez

Shelika Gonzalez  
Annemarie Guare  
Joshua Gutierrez  
Laura Hancock Barry  
Nina Harrison  
Judith Herberg  
Jannette Hernandez  
Christine Holbrook  
Thomas Hulley  
Candace Jaegle  
Marla Jakubiak  
Wendy Kane  
Catherine Kay  
Margery Kennard  
Inês Kenney  
Christine Khamis  
Blair Komar–Bates  
Matthew Lawrence  
Omar Laza  
Kebby Lee  
Hisham Leil  
Benjamin Levine  
Ingrid Liu  
Natalia Lopez  
Rory MacAneney  
Robin MacFadden  
Tanya Mamootil  
Raquel Manzanares  
Jaime Margolis  
Jackeline Martinez  
Annie Maurer  
Emma McEvoy  
Ashley McGill  
Choyce McIntosh  
Judith McLellan  
Leticia Medina–Richman  
Noah Meister  
Ray Mestre  
Blanca Miller  
Michael Morelli  
Angelina Morisi  
Thomas Navin

Carolyn Nunez  
Susan O’Connor  
Carol Ortiz  
Mildred Otero  
Meredith Palmer  
Christina Paradiso  
Priscilla Pettengill  
Julia Popkin  
Faye Rachlin  
Frances Reyes  
Corrine Ryan  
Jenisse Sanchez  
Paul Schack  
Gordon Shaw  
Nuri Sherif  
Rohit Sinha  
Maureen St. Cyr  
Rachel Still  
Uri Strauss  
Irit Tau–Webber  
Grace Teng  
Molly Jane Thoms  
Brandon Tunney  
Esther Tutu  
Alicia Vaughan  
Dorothy Wilkinson  
Jaz Williams  
Amanda Winalski  
Matthew Wishnoff  
Laura Wong  
Leigh Woodruff  
Ashley Zink  
  
**AmeriCorps:**  
Audrey Kamal & Carly Shaw  
  
**Fellow:**  
Haazim Amirali (John Gardner  
Public Service)

Paralegal Wendy Kane retired in 2022 after dedicating over 40 years to legal services.



Wendy first joined legal aid in the 1970s, spending a year at CLA’s predecessor, Western Massachusetts Legal Services (WMLS) as a VISTA volunteer. She returned to WMLS in 1980. Over the years, Wendy helped her clients access critically

important benefits, including Unemployment Insurance, cash assistance, SNAP (“food stamps”), Medicaid, SSI, and Social Security. In the last few years, Wendy also helped her clients navigate the complicated Pandemic Unemployment Assistance system.

One client declared that Wendy was “OUTSTANDING, KIND, CARING, and EFFICIENT.” We are grateful for Wendy’s years of commitment to serving our clients, and the tremendous impact that she made in the lives of thousands of clients.

## 45 Years of Service: Ines Diaz–Rodriguez

*“Those of you who are lucky enough to work with Ines know what a gem she is—hardworking, dedicated, and always smiling, even when she has dozens (at least!) of family law applications to process. Since September 12, 1977, Ines has lived out our core mission—to improve the lives of our clients—every day.”*

–CORRINE RYAN, Managing Attorney of CLA’s Springfield office



Ines Diaz–Rodriguez, family law intake paralegal (photo from the archives)

## CLA Welcomes New Managers



*In January 2022, Leticia Medina-Richman became CLA's first Chief Operating Officer (COO). Attorney Medina-Richman joined CLA's predecessor organization, Legal Assistance Corporation of Central Massachusetts, in 1998 as an elder law attorney and later became a specialist in housing law. In 2014, Attorney Medina-Richman was named Director of the Central West Justice Center. As COO, she provides supervision and resources to legal managers throughout the organization and works as part of the management team to enable the organization to continue providing high-quality legal services for its clients.*



*In May 2022, Lyonel Jean-Pierre Jr. joined CLA as Managing Attorney of its Worcester Office. Attorney Jean-Pierre brings a deep familiarity with CLA's mission, having served as an intern at CLA's predecessor organization, as a Staff Attorney in the Family Law Unit, and as a member of the Board of Directors.*

## CWJC Team

### Board of Managers As of Sept. 30, 2022

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

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

### CWJC Staff As of Sept. 30, 2022

Kristen Williams, Director  
Catherine Ady-Bell  
Alexandra Bonazoli  
Zachary Carlson  
Ann Cascanett  
Karen Cole  
Jessica David  
Caroline Foley  
Claudia Folgosa  
Laitza Chaperon Germain  
Johanna Greenberg  
Luis Guerrero  
Marion Hohn

Nancy Lopez Ramirez  
Cory Mescon  
Amanda Montel  
Kelly Morgan  
Jose Gabriel Otero  
Laura Putnam  
Claudia Quintero  
Luis Reveron  
Tania Rodriguez Reyes  
Alexandra Swanson  
Ellen VanScoyoc  
**Fellow:**  
Maya McCann,  
Equal Justice Works  
**AmeriCorps:**  
Raina Naylor

## CWJC Names New Director



*Kristen Williams was named the Director of CLA's affiliate, the Central West Justice Center (CWJC). Attorney Williams joined CLA in 2014 as an AmeriCorps member assisting tenants in eviction cases. She then became a Staff Attorney helping clients obtain public benefits. Attorney Williams now oversees CWJC's staff of attorneys and paralegals in Worcester, Northampton, Springfield, and Pittsfield practicing in the areas of immigration, food security, employment, benefits, farmworker advocacy, and housing law.*





L-R CLA Deputy Director Faye Rachlin, Managing Attorney for CLA's Worcester Office Lyonel Jean-Pierre Jr., U.S. Congressman James McGovern, CLA Executive Director Jonathan Mannina, CWJC Director Kristen Williams, and CLA Chief Operating Officer Leticia Medina-Richman

## A New Space in Worcester

In May 2022, CLA moved its Worcester operations to the Guaranty Building at 370 Main Street. Located near the Worcester courthouse and easily accessible by public transit, this new office space will better accommodate CLA's growing team. CLA and its affiliate, the Central West Justice Center, now employ a team of over 60 attorneys, paralegals, and support staff in Worcester.

CLA welcomed community members to this new space at an open house in June. In addition to members of the public, representatives from local law firms, social service organizations, and community partners, United States Congressman James McGovern attended the event. In his remarks, Congressman McGovern told guests, "This new office space will allow Community Legal Aid to have an even bigger impact on our community. I'm honored to be a part of this celebration because we need you now more than ever. The work you do here will make a difference—for our community, for our Commonwealth, and for our democracy."

CLA is deeply grateful for the support of Congressman McGovern. It also appreciates its partners and funders, including the Worcester-based **Fletcher Foundation**, **The George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation**, and **The Stoddard Charitable Trust**, for their generous support of the relocation.

*"This new office space will allow Community Legal Aid to have an even bigger impact on our community. I'm honored to be a part of this celebration because we need you now more than ever."*

—JAMES MCGOVERN, United States Congressman

### BERKSHIRE COUNTY

19%

increase in cases related to immigration

### FRANKLIN COUNTY

41%

increase in housing-related cases

### WORCESTER COUNTY

17%

increase in cases related to CORI/Re-entry

### HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

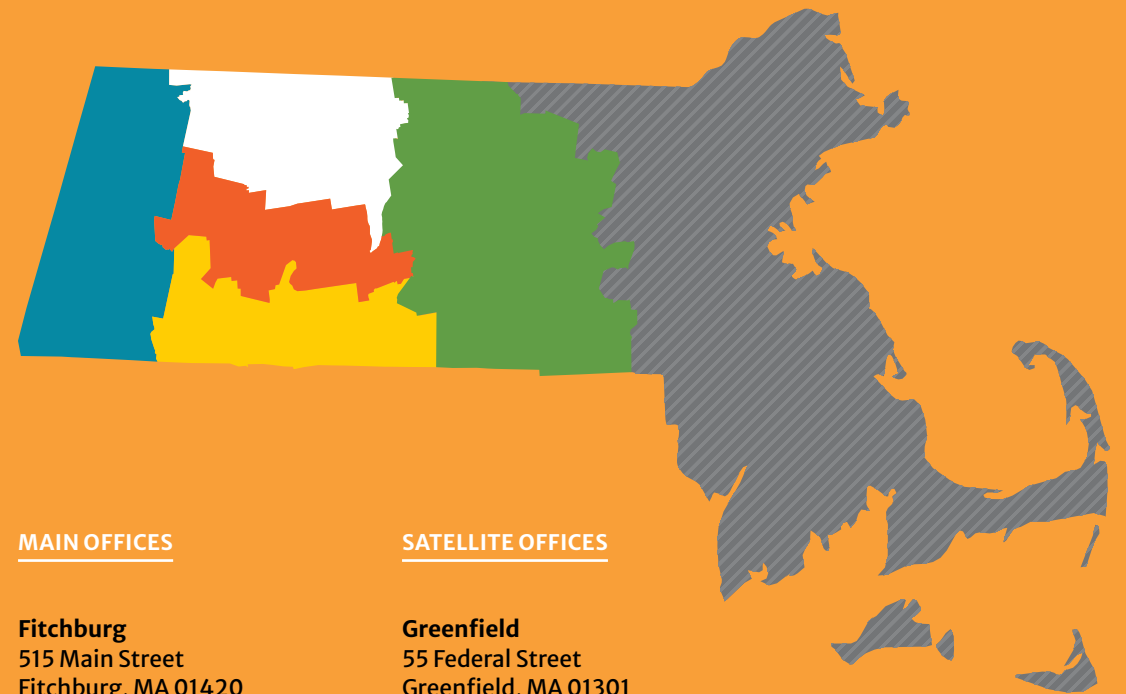
16%

increase in cases related to family law

### HAMPDEN COUNTY

81%

increase in education-related cases



#### MAIN OFFICES

**Fitchburg**  
515 Main Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420

**Northampton**  
20 Hampton Avenue  
Northampton, MA 01060

**Pittsfield**  
152 North Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

**Springfield**  
One Monarch Place  
Springfield, MA 01144

**Worcester**  
370 Main Street, Ste. 200  
Worcester, MA 01608

#### SATELLITE OFFICES

**Greenfield**  
55 Federal Street  
Greenfield, MA 01301

**Holyoke**  
Holyoke Health Center  
230 Maple Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040

**Milford**  
60 North Bow Street  
Milford, MA 01757

**North Adams**  
33 Main Street  
North Adams, MA 01247

**Southbridge**  
79 Elm Street  
Southbridge, MA 01550

*Community Legal Aid and its affiliate, Central West Justice Center, are proud to serve the five counties of Western and Central Massachusetts.*

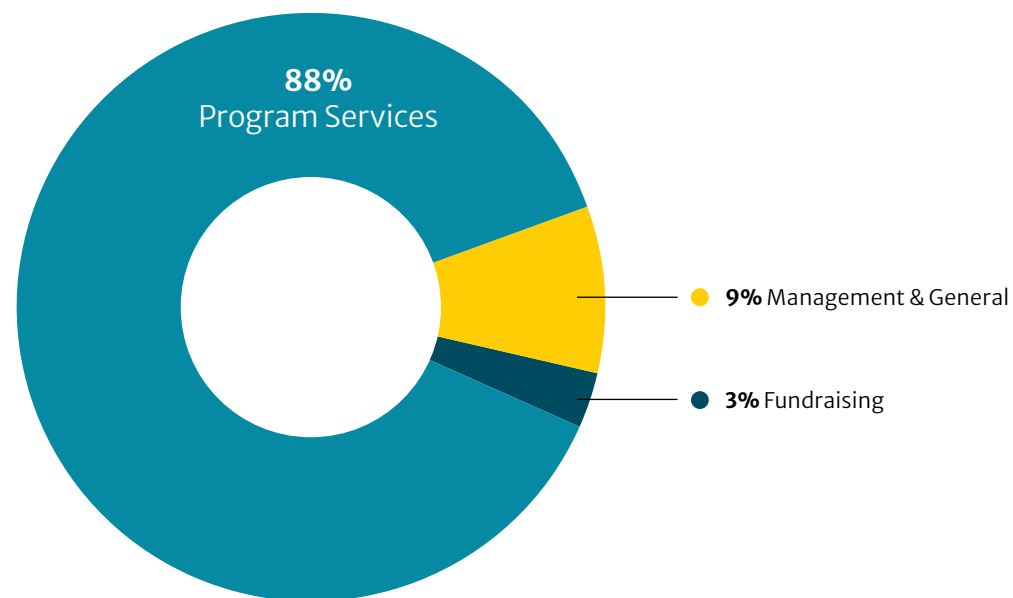
# Financials

## Community Legal Aid and Affiliate Statement of Activities for the Twelve Months Ending September 30, 2022

### REVENUE

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Federal Government Grants                   | \$3,965,606         |
| State & Local                               | \$10,679,628        |
| Foundation Grants                           | \$829,853           |
| Private Fundraising                         | \$291,332           |
| United Way Grants                           | \$148,329           |
| Attorneys' Fees                             | \$64,656            |
| Other Income                                | \$(258,074)         |
| Revenue Before Donated Services             | \$15,721,328        |
| Donated Services - Attorneys                | \$386,393           |
| <b>Total Revenue After Donated Services</b> | <b>\$16,107,721</b> |

### ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES





Community Legal Aid  
370 Main Street, Suite 200  
Worcester, MA 01608

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SPRINGFIELD, MA

# 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.

## MAKE A GIFT TO COMMUNITY LEGAL AID!



Local organizations and individuals like you make Community Legal Aid's work possible. Help CLA continue to thrive by making a tax-deductible gift today. [communitylegal.org/donate](http://communitylegal.org/donate)

## JOIN COMMUNITY LEGAL AID'S PRO BONO PROGRAM!



CLA's volunteers greatly enhance our ability to make justice real for our clients. We refer hundreds of cases a year to attorneys with all levels of experience. Learn more or sign up to volunteer at [communitylegal.org/pro-bono](http://communitylegal.org/pro-bono)

TTY/TDD 508-755-3260 | (855) CLA-LEGAL | 855-252-5342 | [www.communitylegal.org](http://www.communitylegal.org)

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