

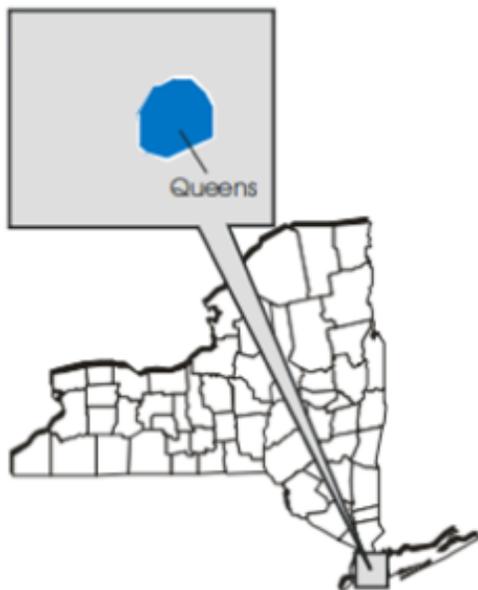
**JEWISH
ASSOCIATION
FOR SERVICES
FOR THE AGED**

2022-2023

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

FY 2022-2023 saw many older Queens tenants and homeowners seeking assistance in eviction and housing foreclosure matters as the courts began to expand their court calendars; eviction stays under the moratoriums and ERAP program were lifted, and affordable housing become an even scarcer NYC commodity. During the reporting period JASA|LSEJ provided no-cost civil legal services to these lower income older adults closing 526 housing cases and benefiting 928 individuals. JASA|LSEJ assisted these clients to obtain rental assistance, sign leases, receive needed repairs, stop harassment by landlords and regain access to their apartments when illegally locked out. In addition to housing matters, JASA|LSEJ provided legal services throughout Queens, Kings, and Nassau Counties to older adults in the areas of public benefits, family violence, scams, and fraud closing an additional 275 cases benefiting 574 individuals.

During the grant period JASA|LSEJ enhanced its technology to help clients better connect with our office and the courts. Specifically, the Far Rockaway Peninsula has always presented geographic and transportation barriers for many older adults, especially those with limited mobility. As a result, JASA|LSEJ received funding to set up a Tele-legal hub in a JASA office in Far Rockaway so clients may connect with our Rego Park office, the courts, and other JASA services. In addition, JASA|LSEJ installed 2 tech kiosks in its Rego Park office where clients needing to appear in court, but who may not be able access the courthouse in person or from their home, can remotely appear in their cases. These areas are private and have been equipped with large monitors, computers, telephones, and faster Wi-Fi.



Population Served: Low Income Queens Residents 60 and Older

Total Funding: \$2,228,957.97

Total IOLA Grant: \$75,000.00

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:

- Total Staff: 18.38
- Paralegals: 2
- Lawyers: 14
- Other: 2.38

JASA|LSEJ also conducted outreach and conducted workshops and trainings reaching 1229 individuals including distributing 112 homeowner manual brochures; represented a Queens tenant association seeking relief against their landlords for its unlawful and harassing actions; continued to assist clients in applying for Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and the Enhanced Housing Voucher (EVH) Programs; obtained orders of protection through family court; and worked with a team of individuals from UCS and Project Guardianship to make significant improvements to NYS's guardianship process.

DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES: CASES

Mr. Z is a 71-year-old low-income Queens resident. His preferred language is Greek. Mr. Z rented a room in an apartment from another older adult, Mr. P. Mr. P, also low income, was the tenant of record for a 2-bedroom apartment in Flushing, New York. In 2022 Mr. P became ill, was hospitalized, and passed away. Thereafter, the owner of the building locked Mr. Z out of the apartment, leaving him without access to his medicines, his worker's compensation checks and other necessary documents. Mr. Z called the police, but the landlord refused to allow him back into his apartment causing him to be homeless. Mr. Z then filed a pro se illegal lockout case and was referred to JASA|LSEJ. JASA|LSEJ first requested an order granting Mr. Z the right to gain access to his apartment so that Mr. Z could retrieve his medicine, clothing, and documents. The court granted the request but would not permit him to stay in the apartment without a hearing. JASA provided funds through one of its social service programs so Mr. Z could stay in a low budget motel pending the hearing. Thereafter JASA|LSEJ conducted a 4-day hearing, resulting in a decision that the owner had illegally locked Mr. Z out of his apartment and ordering immediate restoration to possession.

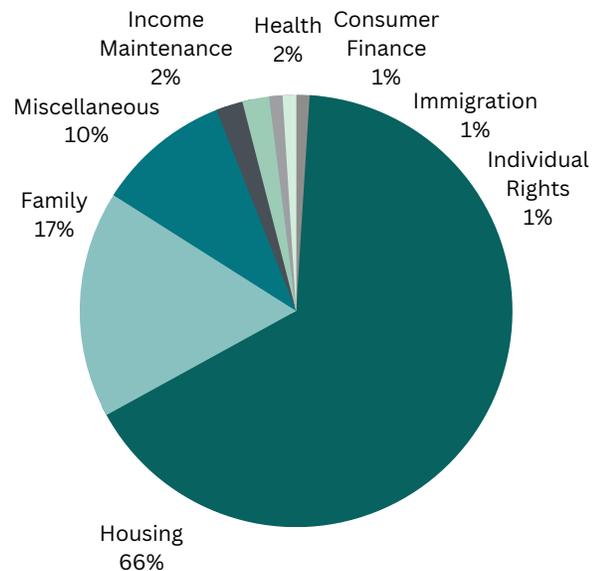
Mrs. D is 66-year-old widowed senior citizen who bought her only home with her husband 21 years ago in Jamaica, Queens. When Mrs. D purchased her home in 2001, her daughter, who was then a young single mother, moved in with her three minor sons. Also following their home purchase in 2001, Mrs. D and her husband, legally adopted a developmentally disabled child that they had been raising and fostering for several years. Unfortunately, in 2019, Mrs. D lost her husband to cancer. Shortly after losing her husband, Mrs. D's daughter secured a job out of state and moved with Mrs. D's youngest grandson. Mrs. D's two older grandsons, now ages 24 and 28, remained with Mrs. D. in her home.

In 2020, in the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Mrs. D’s oldest grandson brought a dog into Mrs. D’s home without her permission. When Mrs. D confronted her grandson and asked that he remove the dog, the relationship she shared with her grandsons began to fall apart. Her grandsons stopped helping Mrs. D around the home; rather, they began destroying Mrs. D’s property, kicking doors in, punching holes in walls and allowing the dog to soil the carpeting and floors. Mrs. D’s grandchildren would also purposefully clutter parts of Mrs. D’s home and throw objects around the house hoping Mrs. D would trip and get hurt. Oftentimes, her grandsons would scream and shout in the home, causing both Mrs. D and her disabled son to be scared for their safety.

By 2021, Mrs. D was terrified of her grandsons and their dog which they used to intimidate her by shouting things like, “Get her...Attack her...Bite her!” One day in the summer of 2021, Mrs. D noticed that a threat – “bitch, you are going to get it” was carved into her hallway wall with what appeared to be a knife. When she asked her grandsons about it, one of her grandsons shouted “shut up; you know how to read and you know what it says.” Mrs. D had enough and wanted to get help but she was also concerned about getting her grandsons in trouble and did not want to contact the police.

When Mrs. D. spoke with JASA|LSEJ, Mrs. D was adamant that she did not want her grandsons excluded from her home, but she did want the dog gone. After a trial was held virtually, Mrs. D obtained two-year Orders of Protection against each of her two grandsons. Mrs. D was also successful in having her grandsons board their dog elsewhere, effectively removing the dog from her home. While her grandsons still remain in her home as was her wishes, Mrs. D reports that their behavior has improved, and they are abiding by the terms of their Orders of Protection.

1,502 people benefitted from 801 legal cases closed



Cases by Legal Problem Area

OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

In 2022 the courthouse legal services offices re-opened and although people generally came by appointment, it did allow another avenue for people to be connected to JASA|LSEJ services. In addition, JASA|LSEJ received direct referrals via emails and phone calls from judges, court attorneys, OCJ, DSS’ homeless services, Aging NYC and CBOs.

In addition, JASA|LSEJ was part of a Queens’ RTC rotation appearing in court conference parts on specified days to offer free legal services to eligible tenants appearing for the first time in holdover and nonpayment proceedings. For those individuals who were ineligible JASA|LSEJ provided advice and counsel, prose assistance and referrals. During the grant period JASA|LSEJ provided 114 people with prose assistance and made 203 referrals.

JASA|LSEJ also conducted remote workshops, trainings, and clinics, focusing on areas and services of most concern: housing, family issues, food insecurity, elder abuse, and racial equity. JASA|LSEJ continued its existing collaboration with Catholic Migration Services (CMS) and also arranged with the Queens Borough President and Aging NYC to hold remote trainings and clinics. JASA|LSEJ reached 1229 people through all these services.

1,343 People Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Services

Number of People Benefitted from Other Services



OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

During the past year JASA implemented a number of new systems and capabilities across the organization in order to improve communication, commence its paperless campaign, while enhancing JASA cyber security including:

- JASA implemented Mimecast to provide enhanced email security for both inbound and outbound email flows. This system allows all JASA employees to send secure emails by simply adding *secure* to the subject line of the email.
- JASA started scanning inbound paper mail at our central location eliminating paper workflows and allowing for greater oversight of mail and program efficiencies.
- JASA recently enhanced WIFI at a number of our locations and opened up our secure WIFI to all JASA clients at all locations. Prior to this JASA WIFI was only accessible by JASA staff.
- JASA upgraded our Google Workspace license to Enterprise. This allows many new features to our account such as meeting recording and unlimited storage for email and documents.

OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

Over the course of FY22-23, JASA rolled out training for all members of JASA staff geared towards building client centered skills including: Cultural Awareness; Trauma Informed Approach, and Person-Centered Planning.

In addition, JASA provided DEIB Training to all staff, management and leadership. JASA continued with its Belong @ JASA initiative to provide management staff with this crucial training to build a safe and equitable workspace for all our employees. The training was designed to uncover and bring awareness to hidden biases and address unfair hiring and development practices.

JASA continued its well-established onboarding and orientation procedure. All new staff participated in JASA's HR New Hire Orientation, which includes a review of JASA policies, information about the agency, EEO, FLSA and sexual harassment protocols.

IMPACT CASES

During this grant year, JASA|LSEJ settled *Best v Prospect 446 LLC* with the landlord installing a ramp in the lobby entrance of Ms. B's building as well as agreeing to pay damages in a combination lump sum and rent waiver through 2024. The ramp was installed in October 2022 and Ms. B now has safe access into and out of her building. This ramp is also being used by other tenants and visitors who cannot traverse the lobby steps.

JASA|LSEJ continued our representation of a group of low-income tenants against Zara Realty with the Pro Bono firm of Milbank LLC and Take Root Justice. JASA|LSEJ and its co-counsel met several times with the 17 Plaintiff tenants both on zoom and in the building to review the settlement terms. In addition to monetary damages, the landlord is agreeing to broader rent regulation policy and practices. This should impact all the tenants in the 100 unit building and hopefully other Zara tenants facing similar issues throughout Queens.

The other Zara case, 150-01 to 150-03 88th Avenue, Various Apartments Jamaica, NY 11432 vs, Zara Realty is resolved, with the DHCR denying Zara's appeal and upholding the DHCR finding that ZARA failed to provide its tenants with keys as required by law. The tenants continue to work with local community housing organizers to enforce their rights.

30
Beneficiaries
were affected
by 3 Impact
Cases

All Impact Cases:

- *Aviles, et al. v. Zara Realty Holding Corp. et al* Index No.: 703854/2018 (Queens Supreme Court)
- 150-01 to 150-03 88th Avenue, Various Apartments Jamaica, NY 11432 Zara Realty PAR Docket. No. HM110012RO (Underlying Docket No. GP110042B)
- *Best v. Prospect 446 LLC et al.* Index No: 22 CV 3347 (MKB)(TAM)

PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

JASA|LSEJ collaborates with the NYS Bar Association Emeritus Program through Fordham Law School to serve as a placement for retired attorneys and is placement for law school students and graduates to complete their 50-hour pro bono service. This year JASA|LSEJ took part in Emeritus Attorney informational sessions which resulted in a new volunteer offering to work with our intake attorney 1 day a week. In addition, JASA|LSEJ became a placement for one law student from Brooklyn Law School's Help clinic. The student worked hybrid with our attorneys 3 days a week during the semester and was able to attend court proceedings.

JASA|LSEJ continued to partner with private law firms to assist low-income older adults and is currently working with Milbank LLP and Take Root Justice in representing the tenant association in an action against Zara Realty.

JASA requires that all staff, including volunteers and law students receive appropriate orientation training on JASA policies and procedures. In addition to regular supervision, all staff, fellows, students, and volunteers attend on-going legal education and training beyond the minimum continuing legal education credits required by New York State. Information on changes in the laws affecting populations served are distributed to staff and reviewed at weekly staff meetings. All staff have access to advocacy on-line services such as probono.net and lawhelp.org. Volunteers and students attend webinars and participate on advocacy listservs where information can be distributed, questions presented, and ideas exchanged.

10 Law Students volunteered 1,710 hours

SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

As previously reported in 2021 the US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living awarded New York State Unified Court System (UCS), along with the Guardianship Project (TGP) and JASA|LSEJ an Elder Justice Innovation Award. This award is to improve outcomes for every New Yorker who is the subject of a guardianship case; to increase access to court services for all New Yorkers and to modernize guardianship case operations. JASA|LSEJ is the chair of the Statewide Stakeholders Assessment subcommittee, and this year conducted an assessment of the current guardianship system in New York State.

In order to do this, the subcommittee drafted, developed and launched a statewide online survey to relevant stakeholders including court staff, judges, Part 36 fiduciaries and lay guardians, bar associations and non-profit legal service providers, private attorneys, medical institutions, law school clinics, community and government agencies. Almost 1000 people, representing 26% of the individuals who received the survey responded.

The results are being written into a report and will guide and assist UCS as they revamp the guardianship process this year. In addition, JASA|LSEJ is a member of the Training and Education subcommittee and worked on the legal information and documents which will be featured on UCS’ revamped guardianship webpage(s).

As part of the NYC Elder Abuse Center (EAC) JASA|LSEJ continued to participate in the New York City’s Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams for Elder Abuse Prevention to Queens County. EMDTs bring together a team of professionals from different disciplines to work on difficult complex elder abuse cases.

The Queens team consists of social services agencies (including JASA social services), the Queens legal services providers, the Queens DA office, Queens APS, Webber CPA, the NYC Department for the Aging and Weil Cornell Medicine. The team met virtually twice a month throughout the grant period reviewing and making recommendations in about 60 complex elder abuse and financial exploitation cases.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

City and County Funding	\$1,465,225
State Funding	\$688,733
IOLA Grant	\$75,000
Total	\$2,228,958

