

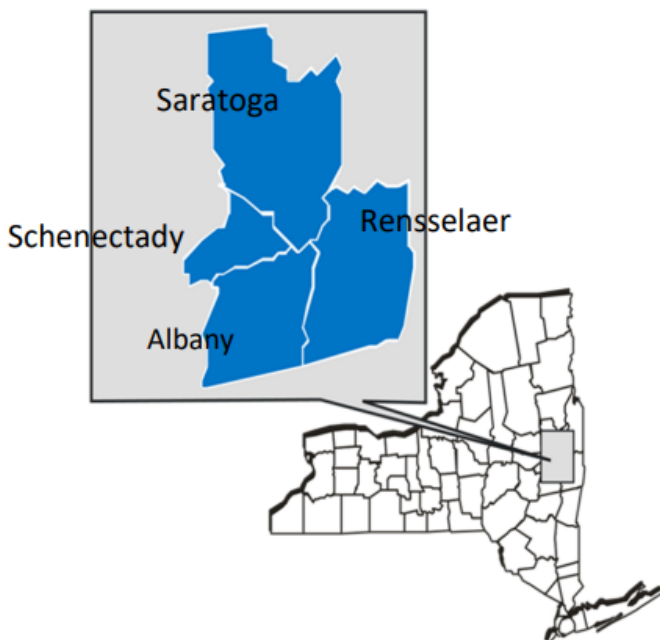
**CAPITAL DISTRICT  
WOMEN'S BAR  
ASSOCIATION  
LEGAL PROJECT**

2022-2023

# OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

The Legal Project has always prided itself on serving low- and moderate-income residents of the Capital Region using cost-effective and innovative strategies in the provision of legal services. Over the past few years, those strategies have truly put to the test as we have emerged from a global pandemic and move forward with a “new normal.” We used the COVID-19 Pandemic as an opportunity to look at the way we provide legal services and develop and implement more efficient means to assist clients. We shifted to remote options, particularly for brief legal services and we have since maintained these options which have greatly decreased our “no-show” rate and have a 92% appointment attended rate for our legal clinics. Last summer, we transitioned from our former case management system to Legal Server, which is much more ideal for a civil legal services program. In such a short time, we have come to rely heavily on LegalServer as it allows for secure remote access to client files and documents.

During this reporting period, have provided legal advice and representation to nearly 1900 residents of the Capital Region utilizing staff, pro bono attorneys, and attorney emeritus. We have provided legal information to over 5200 individuals using both on-person and virtual platforms on various legal topics that are pertinent to our clients. Due to the efforts of our staff and pro bono attorneys we achieved over \$765,000 in equitable distribution awards for victims of domestic violence, over 1.1 million dollars in settlements for homeowners facing foreclosure, and saved our clients \$79,000 in potential costs and fees.



**Population Served: Low Income Women and Families**

**Area Served: 4-County Area in Eastern New York**

**Total Funding: \$2,585,583**

**Total IOLA Grant: \$212,684**

**Staffing Full Time Equivalent:**

- Total Staff: 30.3
- Paralegals: 1
- Lawyers: 15.3
- Other: 14

# DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES: CASES

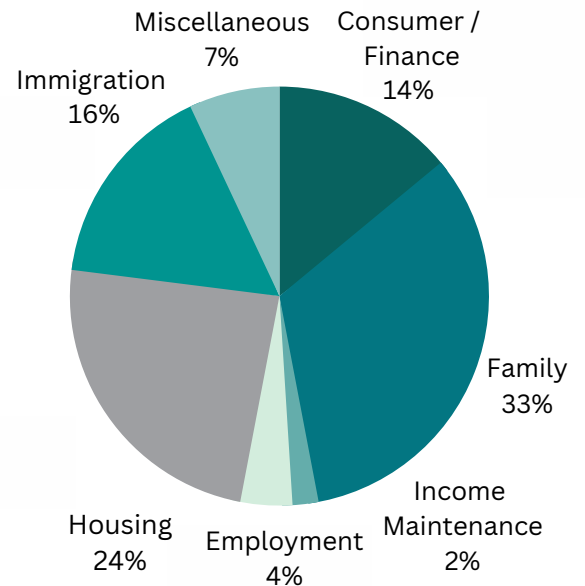
## Consumer/Finance:

Caller inquires on our Bankruptcy services. Our office immediately explains our program and inquires if the caller meets our income and county guidelines. If they do, then an e-mail is sent to Legal Clinic Coordinator for a free half hour legal clinic for advice with a BK/Credit attorney. After the initial consult, BK/Credit Legal Services (LSC) is notified by the attorney if they are ready, and prepared to file for specifically a Chapter 7 BK. If they are, LSC completes full intake, and sends an e-mail to one of our pro bono panel attorneys to take on their case. With some attorneys, LSC assists with document gathering and the credit counseling certification, other panel attorneys prefer to do all the initial work in their office. LSC follow ups with the attorneys quarterly for their case updates and upon completion evaluations are mailed to the clients once a file is ready to be closed.

**4,876**  
**people**  
**benefitted**  
**from**  
**2,032 legal**  
**cases**  
**closed**

## Housing:

A homeowner calls because they are in default on paying their mortgage and just been served a Summons and Complaint. An intake is complet ensuring no conflict, and income and county guidelines are met. A consult is scheduled with an in-house foreclosure attorney within one week of the call. An hour consult is conducted and the case is triaged with the team shortly after. The case is accepted, and a file opened. Court and opposing counsel is notified. We begin workin the case, referrals are made to a housing counselor if needed to begin working on loss mitigation. TLP works on an Answer to the Complaint, attending settlement conferences, and negotiations with the bank for loan modification, refinance, Homeowner Assistance Fund for payoff and reinstatements, and also non retention options, deed in lieu, short sale, cash for keys, or letting the home go to foreclosure.



**Cases by Legal Problem Area**

# OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

**Continuing Legal Education Trainings:** Our staff attorneys develop and conduct free Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs or other free trainings to the community. Many times these trainings are conducted in collaboration with community partners and are provided both in-person and Zoom.

**Legally Speaking Workshops** offer free, custom designed education programs to community groups and organizations on a wide variety of legal topics. Each workshop is tailored to the requesting group’s needs and is provided by either a staff or pro bono attorney.

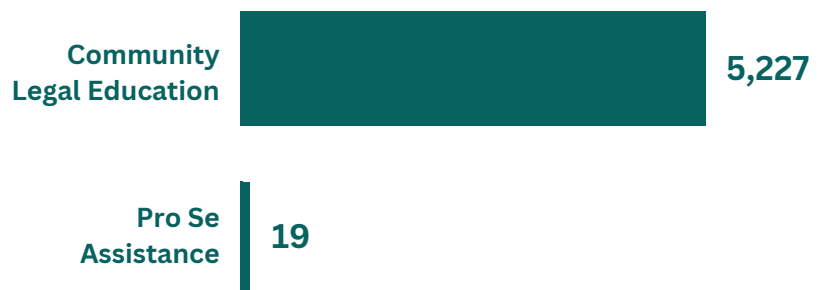
**Uncontested Divorce Workshops:** Conducted in collaboration with a law firm partner, Uncontested Divorce Program provides their law firm attorneys to volunteer and provide training to law students who wish to volunteer and assist those individuals filing for pro se uncontested divorce.

One of our Immigration attorneys is presenting a series of four Know Your Rights sessions about “How to File an Immigration Family Petition, where she explains about the process for family petitions, what forms must be use to file them within USCIS.

Staff Attorneys have presented on the following topics to community groups: Immigration Options and Resources for Afghans; Information about Asylum and Immigration Court and How to File an Immigration Family Petition. And we have provided two Immigration 101 Trainings for DV counselors, clinicians and advocates at the Schenectady YWCA and Catholic Charities of Warren and Washington Counties.

**5,246 People Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Services**

**Number of People Benefitted from Other Services**



## OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

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In July 2022 we transitioned to using an internet-based case management program, LegalServer, and have come to rely heavily on it as it allows for secure remote access to client files and documents. We exclusively use LegalServer to coordinate and document our brief services, having eliminated consult paper files. We do still maintain paper files for extended representation, but those files are mirrored on Legal Server. In addition to maintaining paperless files, we use Legal Server to manage our case triage process and overall program management. Legalserver has allowed us to eliminate all paper intakes and this has greatly program efficiency.

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## OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

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The Legal Project encourages all employees to continue to learn and develop in their professional journeys. One way of doing this is to make sure that employees and board members receive information about upcoming trainings being offered which may be of interest. For employees, work time is allowed to participate in trainings, and when possible costs are covered out of organizational funds. We also ask employees about what kind of trainings they would like to see. If we have the talent and expertise to provide trainings in house, we can do so, otherwise we can investigate bringing in trainers or collaborating with other organizations who have the expertise. For board members, we encourage professional board development through Board Source, Blue Avocado, and NYCON. Employees have the PLI Network available, at no cost, on demand, in addition to state, federal, and community partner trainings.

Our Supervising Domestic Violence Attorney, took 18 hours of CLE credits focused on various ethical aspects of technology use, provision of pro bono services, and attorney supervision and mentorship.

Our Associate Executive Director was accepted and completed the Emerging Non-Profit Leadership Accelerator program through SUNY Albany which among other outcomes is to improve the management, leadership, and professional performance of participants, so as to strengthen the organizations they currently serve and open career pathways.

Our Elder Law Assistance Program attended the Pierro Elder Law Forum which provided an in-person and virtual Elder Law conference. The Forum consisted of 13 speakers providing education for Elder Law and Medicaid updates.

# PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

The Legal Project uses pro bono attorneys, law students and pro bono scholars, undergraduate interns and volunteers, paralegals, and other community volunteers in the provision of legal services. We are a recognized field placement for Albany Law School, and the other local Universities and many of our volunteers learn of our available opportunities through “word of mouth” by current and former volunteers. We employ a Pro Bono Coordinator who works with our Legal Director in the recruitment and training of pro bono attorneys.

During this reporting period, we have utilized NYSBA’s online recruitment tool and have membership with the Pro Bono Coordinators Network Community. Recruitment of pro bono volunteers occurs through existing relationships with NYS attorneys, law firms, agencies, and associations and through Albany Bar Association Paladin platform.

This past year, we have provided training utilizing Zoom and You-Tube services and utilizing recording and streaming options which has provided convenience and ease.

During this reporting period, we have increased our number of Attorney Emeritus working with our program to 5 total who provided 580 volunteer hours.



**107 Attorneys volunteered 2,111 hours**

**33 Law Students volunteered 485 hours**

**5 Other Volunteers volunteered 600 hours**

Each  icon is equal to 14.5 volunteers.

Attorneys are represented through the Green Figure.

Law Students and Other Volunteers are represented through the Grey Figure.

# SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

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We have a new program, Elder Law Assistance Program, and our staff attorney has met with Albany Guardian Society to strengthen our collaboration with them. In addition she has developed a collaboration with LifePath, which is a program dedicated to keeping older neighbors and friends healthy and safe by providing effective programs and supports to help them stay connected to our communities. We have also developed a collaboration with Pierro, Connor & Strauss, LLC to provide educational speaking engagements and an Elder Law Forum Conference.

We maintain significant collaborations with community partners. We have ongoing shared service arrangements with local domestic violence and crime victims' services providers such as Equinox, YWCA, and St. Peter's Crime Victims Services, all of whom we subcontract with to provide civil legal services for their clients. We also maintain ongoing collaborations with local organizations with whom we do not currently share financial ties, such as Well Spring, Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center and Unity House. Most recently, we were invited to collaborate with Albany County Family Court in a holistic domestic violence service program that involves us offering legal services to victims, a new supervised visitation program through St. Catherine's, and rehabilitative programming for abusive partners.

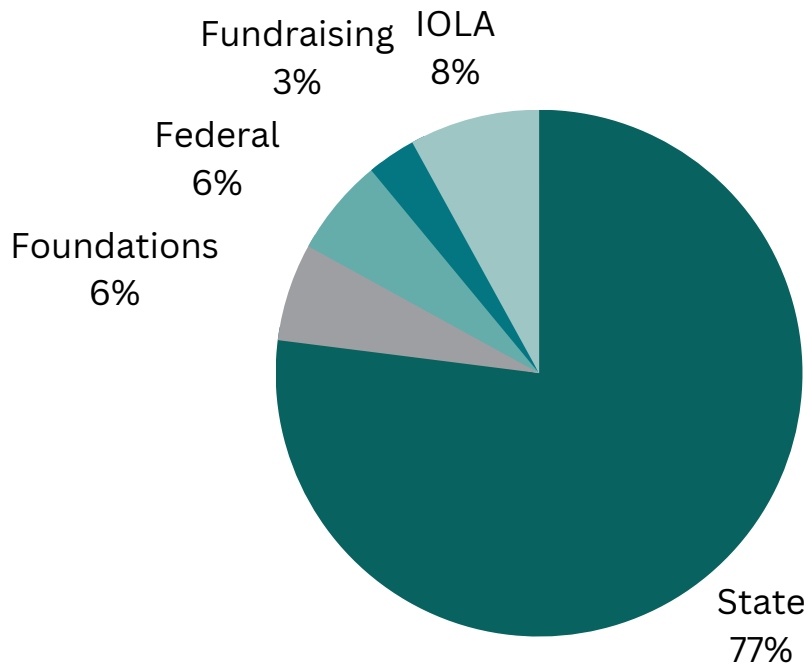
A significant in-house collaboration is between our pro bono Bankruptcy program and our Legal clinic program. The Legal Clinics are now used as the potential client's initial consultation to file bankruptcy. We have eliminated our quarterly bankruptcy in-house clinics and now use only the legal clinics for the client's advice which has tremendously decreased the clients waiting time as well as decreased the time it takes to find a pro bono attorney.

In addition, we have strengthened the following already existing collaborations:

- The **McNulty Veterans Business Center** which pro bono services, workshops for veteran and military owned businesses
- **Albany Law School Community & Economic Development Center and Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region** which works with our Small Business Legal Network Program
- **Union College Political Science Internship Program**: an internship for credit placement for those Political Science major students interested in working at The Legal Project
- **NYS OGS Capital Area Multi-Agency Employee Assistance Program** partners with The Legal Project to provide Legally Speaking Workshops to their employees

# SOURCES OF FUNDING

The Legal Project received **\$2,585,583** in total funding this past year



State Funding	\$1,979,823
IOLA Grant	\$212,684
Federal Funding	\$161,952
Foundations	\$150,833
Fundraising	\$77,791
Other Funding	\$2,500