

FAMILY LEGAL CARE

2022-2023

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2022, we officially changed our name to Family Legal Care. This name better captures the breadth of our services and the compassion that is central to our work.

Number of people and organizations benefited: Thanks to the IOLA Fund’s essential partnership, Family Legal Care served nearly 25,000 families between April 2022 and March 2023. Our staff continued to work remotely and provide unrepresented litigants with the legal information, advice, assistance with documents, and mock hearing preparation they need to self-advocate in Family Court as we have moved from the crisis response of the pandemic into navigating a new normal of hybrid court proceedings. Highlights of the past year include:

- **Family Law Information Helplines:** 17,706 people received legal information through our Phone, Email, and Live-Chat Helplines. The Helplines continue to be the main entry point to Family Legal Care’s services.
- **Legal Consultations:** Our staff attorneys completed 2,592 one-one-one consultations to provide legal advice and assistance completing Court documents. 1,351 of these consultations were with new clients; the remaining 1,241 were follow-up consultations.
- **Pro Bono Program:** Family Legal Care’s Pro Bono Program completed 480 consultations, 446 of which were completed by volunteer attorneys. This is the highest number of consultations our Pro Bono Program has ever completed in a single year.
- **Legal Resource Guides (LRGs):** 27,009 Legal Resource Guides were distributed from courthouses or community partners. An additional 153,575 people accessed digital LRGs on our website. Our Court Project team distributed 10,148 Legal Resources Information pamphlets created for the pandemic.



Population Served: Low Income Populations

Total Funding: \$4,044,901

Total IOLA Grant: \$135,000

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:

- Total Staff: 23.86
- Other: 11.90
- Lawyers: 11.96

- **Family Law Education and Community Outreach:** 200 participants attended webinars and live virtual events. Pre-recorded legal education videos were viewed 24,218 times.
- **Significant improvements in Family Legal Care’s capacity to deliver services:** This year, we introduced automation to our Helplines. As previously detailed, the demand on our Helplines skyrocketed during the pandemic. Some of this was due to an increasing number of calls that were not related to family law at all, or where callers are asking about details of their hearings that we do not have access to and a Court clerk must answer. Our new automation system helps filter the calls we receive, directing clients with questions outside the scope of our mission to resources that may be useful to them, and enabling the callers we can help to reach us faster and more easily. Before automation, our call acceptance rate was between 25%-29%, meaning that just over a quarter of the people calling our Helplines were receiving legal information about family law. Since introducing automation, the acceptance rate has increased to 60%, so more pro se litigants are getting the legal information they need more quickly. Additionally, we restructured our Helpline to help manage the Helpline staff’s workload and increase their support network, which has boosted morale and reduced turnover.

DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES: CASES

Example 1, Family Law:

Jerry, non-custodial father to his two children, called Family Legal Care for help about child support. The mother had recently filed for child support in Yonkers Family Court. Jerry works three jobs, two of which are commission-based and one of which is seasonal, but they are all at-will and flexible. Jerry was worried about how the Support Magistrate would factor these jobs into his calculation when his paychecks were not regular, as is the nature of sales work.

Our Staff Attorney walked Jerry through the child support process - how child support is calculated, what evidence to gather, and how best to submit and present it in Court. Jerry was able to go into the court proceeding feeling nervous but prepared.

After the hearing, he and the mother were able to have a conversation about what they really wanted. Jerry was able to understand the mother’s point of view, and was better able to articulate what he wanted because he knew his rights and what the law was. They came to an agreement in the best interests of their children outside of Court, and the mother withdrew her petition.

Example 2, Family Law:

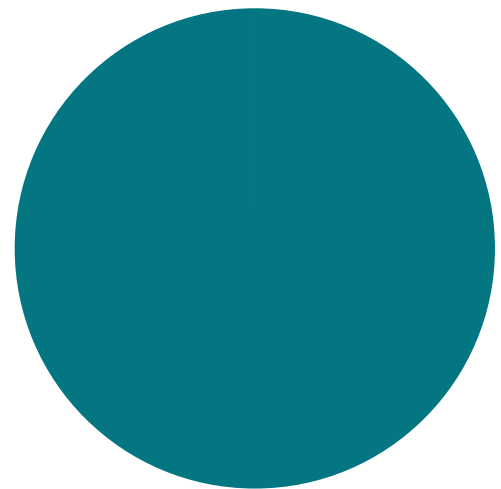
Gabriel is a monolingual Spanish speaker and the non-custodial father of 9 y/o child. He and his ex, the daughter’s mother, had an informal custody and visitation agreement for many years. Recently, the mother informed Gabriel she was moving to Florida with his daughter, and that he could only see her over the summers. Gabriel did not agree to this, as it would make his visits virtually impossible. The mother then filed a petition in Kings County Family Court seeking sole custody. During one of the custody hearings, Gabriel asked to be assigned counsel.

At the next virtual hearing, he was unable to connect due to technical difficulties. He was not assigned an attorney and the Court gave the mother full custody and no visitation rights to Gabriel. Gabriel reached out to Family Legal Care for help with his precarious situation, and to help him get his case reopened.

One of our Staff Attorneys explained custody case procedure. Gabriel had never filed any petitions in the case because this was his first time in court and he did not know what to do, he doesn’t speak much English, and he was waiting to be assigned an attorney to help him, but that never happened. Our Staff Attorney helped draft a motion to re-calendar the hearing and a petition for visitation, which would hopefully delay the mother’s relocation, and at the very least, guarantee him the right to see his child.

With our help, Gabriel was able to get his motion docketed and a hearing scheduled so he would get the opportunity to make his case.

**3,072 people
benefitted
from
3,072 legal
cases closed**



Family
100%

**Cases by Legal
Problem Area**

OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

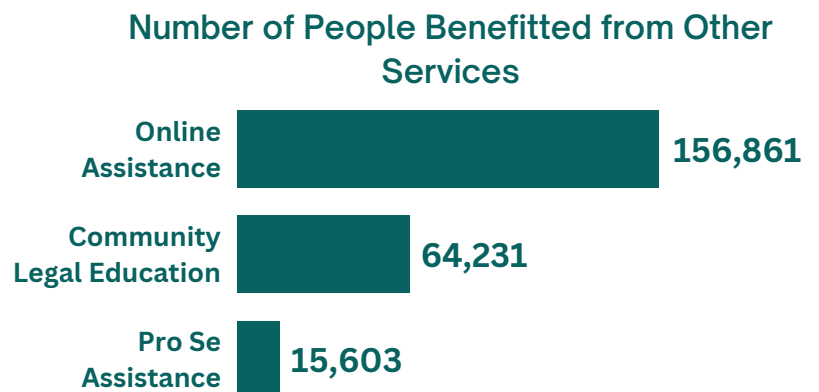
Digital Justice Tools:

Family Law Navigator: This powerful tool gives parents and caregivers a helpful starting point to begin addressing their family law issue. Users answer questions about their family law topic, and are given a detailed, customized report about the next steps they should take, including what forms and petitions need to be filled out. Users can also use Family Law Navigator to request a consultation from a pro bono attorney through our Pro Bono Program. The Family Law Navigator was used 1885 times during this contract period.

Guided Court Forms: Our Guided Court Forms make the complex and often inaccessible Court documents easy to find, understand, and fill out. Litigants answer a few easy-to-understand questions in plain language, and their answers are mapped onto the fields of the form without additional PDF-editing software. The forms are available on our website and linked to in Family Law Navigator, so a user who has questions about their family law topic can go through the Navigator to get a customized report about their next steps, learn which forms and petitions they will need to file, and find a link to the Guided Court Form. Our 6 available Guided Court Forms were completed 784 times.

Tech Hubs: The Tech Hub is a place where parents and caregivers can use all of the computer equipment they need to access the virtual court, even before their first hearing. Our computers, printers, and scanners are all free to use to fill out and submit important court documents. We also have a Staff Attorney available remotely to answer any legal questions the litigants have about the paperwork they are filling out, and if they have more in-depth questions about their case, the Tech Hub can help schedule an hour-long consultation with a Family Legal Care Staff Attorney. When it is time for their virtual hearing, litigants can use our computers, webcams and microphones, and stable internet connection to attend. We served 553 people through our Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx Tech Hubs during the contract period.

236,695 People Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Services



OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

Our Director of Legal Technology oversees Family Legal Care's use of technology for data management and program delivery, including the Digital Justice Initiative. Important technological innovations for our participants this year include the launch of our Guided Court Forms, which make it easy to find, understand, and fill out important Court documents from a mobile device.

Important technological improvements for our service delivery this year is introducing automation for our Helplines and Staff Attorneys. As detailed in the Overview of Achievements section, our new automation system has dramatically increased the call acceptance rate on our Helplines, so parents and caregivers are receiving the legal information they need more quickly. It also means that our Program Associates are receiving fewer calls outside of our scope of services, such as cases involving housing court or about the specifics of a Family Court hearing, which is information that we do not have access to. In addition to making our program operations more efficient, it has boosted employee morale and reduced turnover on our Helplines. We also automated the Limited Engagement Agreement process. Clients receive the LEA automatically when their intake appointment with a Staff Attorney is scheduled. When it has been signed by the attorney and client, it is automatically uploaded to our Salesforce system, saving the Staff Attorney from having to perform these tasks manually.

OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

Family Legal Care prides itself on our workplace culture that prioritizes professional development for all employees. We dedicate a portion of the operating budget to professional development, and this year we received a large grant from a former Board Member restricted to professional development. When an employee attends a training or CLE, they are encouraged to share what they have learned with their colleagues to foster a culture of shared knowledge.

In the past year, Family Legal Care's Program staff completed a training facilitated by the Interstate Office of Child Support, and a 5-hour training on Trial Advocacy. Our Staff Attorneys take regular CLE trainings as required by the New York CLE Board; many attend additional trainings and webinars, legislative briefings, and workshops.

Family Legal Care's Legal Director completed the week-long Developing Leaders program at Columbia Business School. She also co-taught a clinic with students at New York Law School with Family Legal Care's Director of Legal Technology. Under the supervision of Staff Attorneys, students assist with client intakes, conduct client interviews, and drafting petitions and other documents.

PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

Family Legal Care's Pro Bono Team has established partnerships with over a dozen major law firms and corporate legal departments in NYC. We provide detailed training to volunteer attorneys in family law, the procedures of the Family Court, and the utilization of our Pro Bono Program platform. Family Legal Care is now certified as a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) provider, so Pro Bono Program training provides CLE credits to lawyers who complete it. Each pro bono partner commits to completing a number of consultations per month, and Family Legal Care connects them to a client who needs help on their family court case.

We receive client referrals from our network of community-based nonprofit service providers, as well as callers who reach out to our Family Law Helplines or use the Family Law Navigator tool on our website. Our Program Associates on the Helplines assist with pro bono client intakes to ensure we obtain client and case information efficiently. Our Pro Bono Program Coordinator assists with scheduling each client's pro bono appointment, providing instruction and technical support on using the pro bono platform, and organizing legal documents to make the best use of time during their consultation.

We also provide digital Legal Resource Guides (LRGs) to augment the legal advice clients receive. If a follow-up consultation is needed as the case progresses, we prioritize pairing the client with the same attorney so there is continuity on the case.



109 Attorneys volunteered 564 hours

4 Law Students volunteered 920 hours

14 Other Volunteers volunteered 216 hours

Each  icon is equal to 12.7 volunteers.

Attorneys are represented through the Green Figure.

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

This year, we completed 480 pro bono consultations, the highest single-year total in the program's history. We also created referral partnerships with two new service providers, including: Legal Hand Call-In Center serving Westchester Counties; and Mount Sinai Medical Legal Partnership.

In Spring 2023 Family Legal Care hosted two Pro Bono Scholars, both third-year law students from Cardozo Law School. They have been assisting in the Pro Bono Program, assisting with legal research, and updating Family Legal Care's internal training manual.

SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

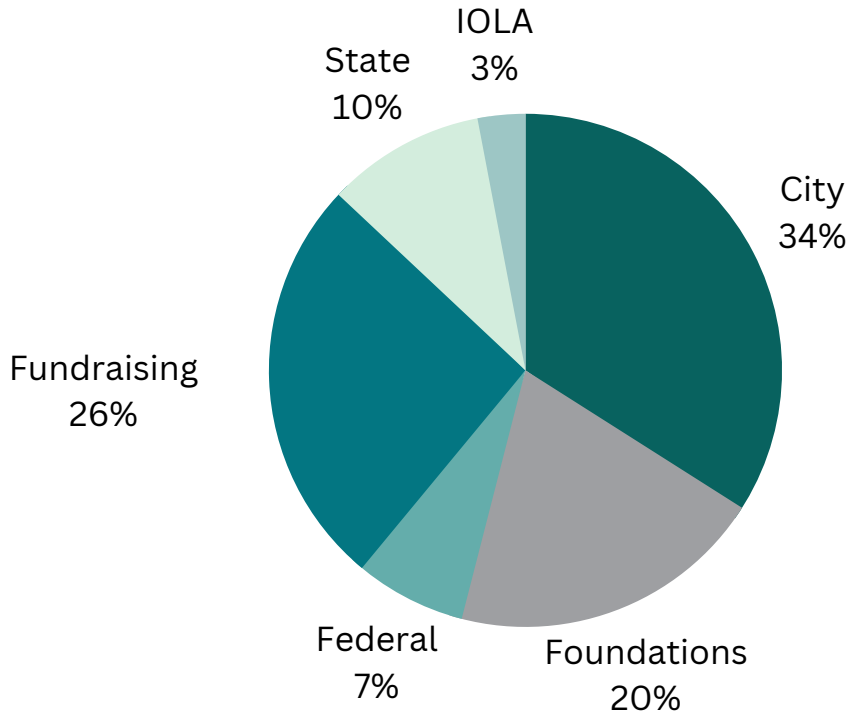
Family Legal Care has a close relationship with the Family Court, and we conduct mutual referrals with our partners in the legal services community, including the City Bar Justice Center, Advocates for Children, Housing Court Answers, and Her Justice. We refer clients who need support on domestic violence matters to Safe Horizon and local Family Justice Centers. We have relationships with organizations who provide a wide range of other services, including settlement houses, job training providers, mental and physical health clinics, substance use treatment centers, and re-entry service providers for people returning from incarceration.

An important partner for our Tech Hub program is Legal Hand Jamaica, which houses our Queens Tech Hub. Additionally, our Community Outreach program partners with established wrap-around service providers to present legal education workshops and clinics to their clients who would be a good fit for Family Legal Care's services.

We also partner with the following law firms and corporate legal departments through Pro Bono Program: Davis Polk; Fried Frank; Milbank; Proskauer Rose; Sullivan & Cromwell; Alston & Bird; Skadden; Stroock & Stroock & Lavan; Shearman & Sterling; Travelers; Bloomberg; The Bank of New York Mellon; The Goodstein Firm; Verizon; AIG; and JPMorgan. Our Pro Bono Program service partners include: Legal Hand Call-In Centers serving Nassau and Suffolk Counties, Schenectady and Albany Counties, and Westchester Counties; The Legal Project of the Capital District Women's Bar Association; Nassau Suffolk Law Services; Legal Assistance of Western New York (LawNY); the Rural Law Center; and the Long Island Advocacy Center; Center for Elder Law & Justice; and Community Legal Help Project. These partnerships enable us to expand the footprint of Family Legal Care's services throughout New York State.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Family Legal Care received **\$4,044,901** in total funding this past year



City and County Funding	\$1,356,367
Fundraising	\$1,047,123
Foundations	\$808,600
State Funding	\$411,038
Federal	\$285,837
IOLA	\$135,000
Other	\$936