

LEGAL SERVICES NYC

2022-2023

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

During the grant period, Legal Service NYC handled 49,388 individual cases that benefited more than 108,628 people. We obtained \$20,707,942 in retroactive benefits and \$987,471 in monthly benefits (\$11,849,652 annualized). Our work saved taxpayers \$275,831,945. Our systemic litigation and advocacy helped more than 2.25 million low-income New Yorkers. Our achievements include:

Life-Changing Work for New York City Tenants and Their Families: Affordable, decent and stable housing is an overwhelming need for New York City’s low-income residents. We helped thousands of New Yorkers with life-changing housing work during the reporting period, handling 25,390 cases. We stopped evictions, secured the repair of unsafe living conditions, and preserved affordable housing by: fighting eviction proceedings aggressively; securing individual and building-wide rent reductions; securing repairs of uninhabitable living conditions; helping families obtain the benefits they need to pay rent arrears and afford future rent; representing families to preserve Section 8 benefits, NYCHA housing, SCRIE, DRIE and other housing subsidies; combatting housing discrimination; and conducting systemic litigation and advocacy to protect large numbers of low-income tenants. Over the year, we recovered over \$30,876 in monthly benefits (or \$370,512 annualized), \$3,880,353 in retroactive awards and settlements, and \$7.7 million in avoided payments for our housing clients for rent subsidies and grants, rent abatements, rent overcharge or other wrongs.

In a typical example of our enormous portfolio of housing work, we sued the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) on behalf of residents of the Carleton Manor development after learning that tenants there had been without hot water for almost a



Service Area:
New York City Metropolitan Area

Population Served: General Low Income Population

Total Funding: \$126,550,908

Total IOLA Grant: \$5,040,000

Staffing Full Time Equivalentents:

- Total Staff: 636.35
- Paralegals: 140.65
- Lawyers: 370.5
- Other: 125.25

year. After tireless advocacy, NYCHA fixed the hot water and water pressure and the parties settled, with NYCHA also providing 25% rent abatement credits for the period. This work benefited hundreds of residents.

Stabilizing Immigrants: New York City's immigrants are a vital, diverse and deeply-valued part of our population. During the reporting period, LSNYC handled 5,917 immigration cases, providing representation and other legal assistance to immigrants in a wide range of matters. We helped to secure naturalization, work authorizations, adjustment of status, and renewal of green cards. We represented immigrants in asylum and removal cases. In addition, we assisted immigrant crime victims and battered immigrants through U- and T-visa applications and VAWA self-petitions and battered spouse waivers. We also represented unaccompanied minor children seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, asylum, and other forms of immigration relief.

In one example of our systemic immigration work, we submitted comments to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to urge the removal of unlawful and unnecessary obstacles for people with disabilities seeking citizenship. USCIS accepted some of our comments and announced overall improvements in October 2022. The improvements will help thousands of disabled people who are seeking citizenship.

Protecting vulnerable homeowners from economic exploitation: During the reporting period, we handled 1,400 foreclosure cases and our advocacy was instrumental in a major win with the enactment of the Foreclosure Abuse Prevention Act—the biggest policy win for low-income New York homeowners in a long time. As the nation's largest team of free legal services foreclosure attorneys, we represented homeowners in foreclosure cases and in state and federal court litigation challenging predatory lending, abusive mortgage servicing, scams targeting vulnerable homeowners, and fair housing and lending violations. We also provided legal advice and pro se assistance through court-based clinics; helped clients negotiate home-saving mortgage solutions; and advocated for fairer lending rules and better enforcement of laws protecting consumers from predatory practices. In addition, LSNYC is the Legal Training and Technical support provider for the entire NYC foreclosure prevention network.

The above reflect only a slice of our major accomplishments during the period, in addition to those in securing income for impoverished families, protecting domestic violence survivors, safeguarding critical education rights and much more.

DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES: CASES

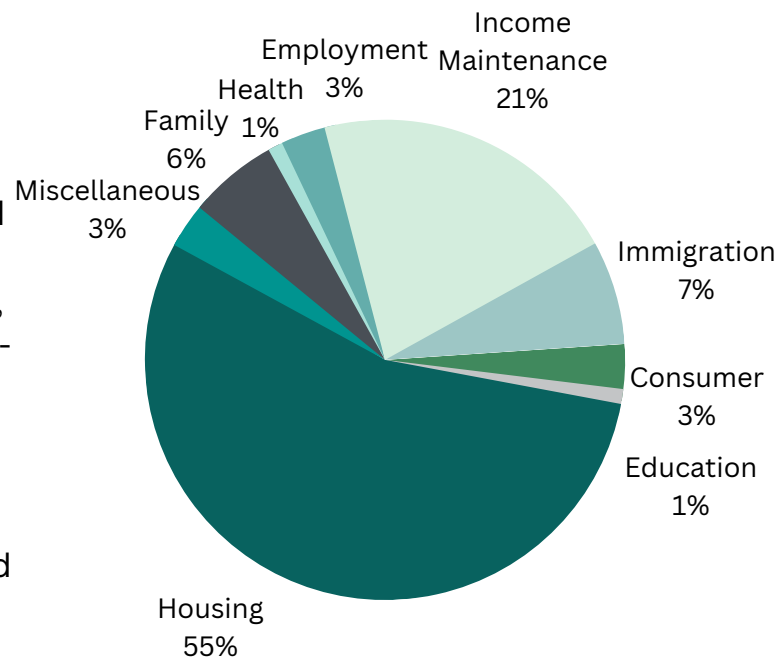
Housing

LSNYC is helping 77-year-old tenant Mr. R fight severe harassment by his landlord who is trying to push him out of his rent-stabilized home in Brooklyn’s rapidly gentrifying Crown Heights neighborhood. Mr. R is contending with sewage bubbling up into his bathtub and kitchen sink, chunks of plaster raining down into his bedroom from the moldy, leaking ceiling, and faulty electrical wiring. Outside, the landlord has blocked Mr. R’s entrance with tents and port-o-potties. LSNYC is standing with Mr. R and tenants subjected to similar injustice throughout the city. We are advocating on his behalf, suing the landlord, raising awareness through various media, and forcing city agencies to do their jobs.

Immigration

We represented Mr. G, a young, gay Honduran man who suffered harassment and abuse throughout his life, including several attempted rapes. In a truly terrifying incident, Mr. G was also menaced, assaulted and tear-gassed by the Honduran security police for being gay. Mr. G was desperate and crossed the United States border in early 2019 seeking asylum. Our team, which included a social worker as well a lawyer, did intensive work to develop the case for hearing. In January of this year the Immigration Judge granted asylum. The Department of Homeland Security then waived their appeal. Mr. G was overjoyed by the decision, is now attending English and GED classes, and anticipates a transformed future.

52,947
people
benefitted from
25,122
legal cases
closed



**Cases by
Legal Problem Area**

OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

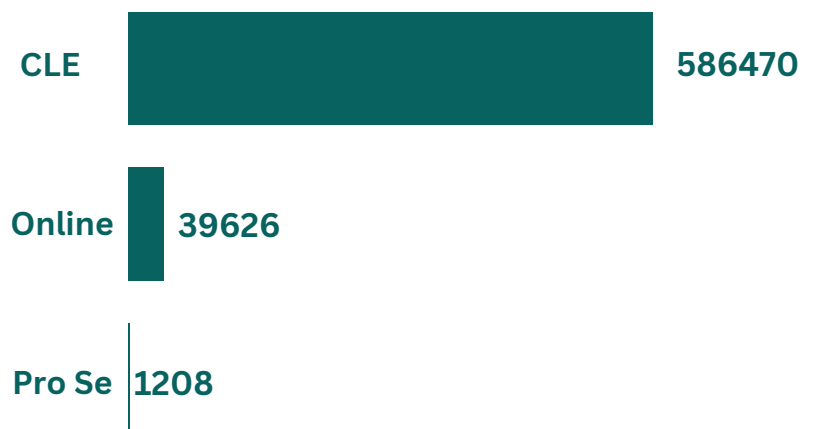
From April 2022 through March 2023, our community legal education and outreach and online outreach assisted 586,470 people. This included 5,002 people reached through in-person events, 9,497 people participating in interactive online events, and 571,971 people accessing pre-recorded or static online content. We provided Know Your Rights (KYR) community education in many languages to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers through in-person presentations, radio and television spots, YouTube videos, Zoom, Facebook Live, Twitter, and LawHelpNYC. We operated Legal Hand centers in Bronx and Queens. These are easily accessed neighborhood storefront centers where community members can get help with problems to prevent them from turning into legal actions and learn about LSNYC’s services.

Education KYR Trainings: Racism, segregation, and the inequity in educational funding and supports have long made it difficult for low-income New Yorkers to access a quality education in our city. In response to the needs of low-income students and their parents, our Education Advocacy Project provided legal education and KYR trainings to over 800 community members in the areas of special education, access to education, school discipline, and other education issues. These included trainings on special education rights at numerous locations.

Housing Legal Information & Education for Tenants: In response to the needs of low-income tenants, we provided many trainings on housing rights and special rental assistance programs that reached scores of low-income tenants. These trainings have prevented homelessness by helping tenants stay in their homes.

627,304
people
benefitted from
Services Other
Than Direct
Legal Services

Number of People Benefitted from Other Services



OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

We engaged in a series of cybersecurity initiatives, including: Mimecast email filtration for all inbound email to mitigate the risks of phishing emails; automatic failover of phone sessions to improve the reliability of calls for our clients, reducing the incidence of dropped calls and poor call quality; an external security assessment by a trusted vendor that helped resolve flaws found in our system; and the completion of the first phase of our Access Line automation project, in which we deployed a new database for contacts and caller history and can now transfer caller data into Legal Server without rekeying. Phase 2, focused on decision trees, is now underway. In addition to these critical cybersecurity projects, we are embarking on a transformational Knowledge Management initiative. This initiative seeks to leverage cutting edge Knowledge Management, Document Management, and Automation technologies, currently used almost exclusively in private sector law practices, and adapt them for use in civil legal services.

OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

LSNYC's Justice Learning Center (JLC) is an essential continuing legal education resource for all employees as well as advocates from other organizations. We recently added an additional position to the JLC to enhance training for our growing cohort of new attorneys. In the past year, the JLC provided trainings for over 3,000 advocates on substantive law, legal practice skills, ethics, and client skills. Such trainings are provided in several formats—in person, online and recordings. We have about 100 on-demand trainings.

In the past year, substantive trainings were conducted in Housing, Immigration, Family, Government Benefits, Foreclosure, Economic Development, LGBTQ and HIV Advocacy, Consumer, Education and Employment law, Health, and other topics. For example, last year the JLC provided a portfolio of trainings on critical Medicaid home care benefits. This portfolio included trainings on Medicaid and Medicare Basics, Issue Spotting in Medicaid Home Care cases, and Medicaid Home Care Appeals.

The JLC, along with Senior Leadership, is also presenting the Leadership Institute, an intensive 9-month managers skill development program for all of our more than 100 managers. The Institute started in November and has covered hybrid work challenges, employment law fundamentals for managers, management skills for promoting our mission, skills for advancing DEIB, and much more.

The JLC curriculum also includes rich Diversity, Equity and Inclusion offerings, including for example: Debiasing the Hiring Process; Anti-Oppression Training on Trans, Gender Non-Conforming, Non-Binary Individuals Seeking Legal Services; Skill Building for Effective Language Interpretation; and Navigating Transitions and Supporting Workplace Wellness.

IMPACT CASES

President Street Tenants

LSNYC's ongoing, multi-level, and often transformative efforts on behalf of low-income tenants is illustrated by our work for the tenant association of a building on President Street in Brooklyn. Our advocacy in this building has included building-wide and individual applications at DHCR for reductions in rent due to decreased services; defending over a dozen eviction cases; intervening in an HPD-initiated action for repairs and to stop tenant harassment; and supporting the creation of a community revolving fund for qualifying tenants who possess the powerful defense pursuant to MDL 302-a (a rent impairing violation).

2,249,426
beneficiaries
were affected by
21
Impact Cases

Milestones and Impacts: An early success in the building was obtaining a building-wide retroactive rent reduction order issued by DHCR on behalf of the Tenant Association that went into effect during the rent strike. The rent reduction order decreased the rent stabilized rent of all members of the tenant association, giving them one of many defenses to the nonpayment cases commenced against them. In the same building, after intervening in an HPD-initiated HP case seeking adequate repairs and a stop to ongoing tenant harassment, we were able to leverage civil penalties that would have been paid to the city to instead bargain for real repairs by workers the tenants approved, and with scopes of work agreed upon by the tenants. This case was settled on March 21, 2023, and repairs began on April 10, 2023.

The rent strike—which will reach a historic three-year-mark in May—continues as all tenants' eviction cases are awaiting decisions from Housing Court and/or are in the midst of ongoing briefing schedules.

Jacob Riis Houses

LSNYC is advocating for safe drinking water for tens of thousands of tenants in the 15,483-unit Jacob Riis Houses in the East Village. NYCHA reported, then retracted, unsafe levels of arsenic in the water supply of the public housing project. We testified at a city council probe related to NYCHA's report/retraction. Our team then prepared and sent a demand letter to NYCHA, the Department of Health, and the Department of Environmental Services in connection with the incident, and prepared and submitted a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request to obtain documents about the arsenic issue at the complex as well as policies and procedures regarding NYCHA's environmental justice and environmental health policies. We received confirmation that NYCHA provided bottled water to residents for a short time and would conduct twice monthly water testing through the end of 2022, but we are still waiting on the FOIL request, which will determine our next steps. We are part of a coalition of nonprofits assisting Jacob Riis residents in matters ranging from legal services, to water testing, to providing bottled water and other resources. The coalition was spearheaded by Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES), a neighborhood housing and preservation organization. As part of this multidimensional advocacy effort, LSNYC will also be providing legal support to Jacob Riis Tenant Association.

All Impact Cases

11 New Montrose Avenue

1372 Franklin Ave HDFC

361-371 East 163rd Street, Bronx NY 10451

575 Herkimer Street

850 Bryant Avenue, Bronx, NY 10474

Atlantic Plaza Towers

Baychester Villas Homeowners Association Inc.

Carleton Manor Resident Council

CHIP, RSA v. City of New York, et al.

Parkchester Apartments Accessibility Negotiations

Fields v. Russ, 1:19-cv-11368 (ER)

Hartshorne v. Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

Launch Investigation (Fair Housing Complaints filed with HUD; HUD Referred the Complaints to the Dept of Justice for Further Investigation)

Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Company

Patrick v. Success Academy

S.M. v. State

Shaffner, et al. v. Sterling PL Condo LLC v. Shaffner

Shaquane Mitchell

Tamickah Anthony et al. v. NYCHA

President Street Tenants

U.S. Bank v. Simon

PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

LSNYC's pro bono program handled 3,108 cases during the period. We utilized law firms, corporations, law schools, and individual volunteers to serve clients and advance our mission. Pro bono volunteers helped in at least three ways: (1) co-counseling on large cases; (2) taking on special projects—such as research and brief writing; and (3) direct representation of clients through clinics and individual placements.

Our pro bono unit created innovative new programming to respond to emergent client needs during the period. First, we created a biweekly SNAP application clinic to bring food security to low-income families, along with cash assistance and Medicaid. Second, LSNYC also created a monthly clinic to help tenants who are senior citizens or people with disabilities to apply for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) or Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). These essential benefits freeze the rents of tenants who are living in rent regulated housing, while providing landlords with tax credits to cover the rent increase. Finally, we created biweekly clinics to help tenants who are facing eviction to apply for One-Shot Deals (OSDs). OSDs are New York City benefit that pays off back rent for tenants who can prove that they are able to pay their rent going forward—preventing eviction while also making landlords whole. More than 20 law firms and corporations now partner with LSNYC on these three new projects.



4,466 Attorneys volunteered 63,753 hours

424 Law Students volunteered 14,417 hours

261 Other Volunteers volunteered 3,000 hours

Each  icon is equal to 51.5 volunteers.

Attorneys are represented through the Green Figure.

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

LSNYC has additionally continued to expand our pro bono work in other essential areas. To name just one, our housing conditions pro bono work has grown to include not only large numbers of full representation cases, but an additional limited scope clinic to help more tenants to draft, file, and serve papers on landlords to compel them to make repairs. We have enhanced the impact of this work by also providing tenants with related eviction advice—since repairs are a common reason that tenants withhold rent, and in turn face nonpayment cases from landlords.

SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

Throughout the city and across all of our practices, LSNYC engages with hundreds of collaborators and partners to help deliver on our mission of fighting poverty and seeking racial, social and economic justice for New Yorkers in need, including dozens of private law firms; CBOs and poverty-advocacy groups; community healthcare providers; law schools; courts and elected officials; and the larger community of legal services providers across the state and nation. Many of our collaborations are long relationships, with nonprofit partners like Callen-Lorde, HELP USA, FedCap, Montefiore Hospital, and Catholic Charities; and corporate/pro bono partners including Skadden, Simpson Thacher, MetLife, Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley. Our Director of Pro Bono is a founder and key leader in New York City's Public Interest Pro Bono Association's (PIPBA). We are also the Legal Training and Technical support provider for the entire NYC foreclosure prevention network, and our ED serves on the Permanent Commission on Access to Justice and the New York State Legal Services Coalition's Board of Directors.

Manhattan: Connecting Hunger & Justice – We have partnered with the West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) to provide those experiencing food insecurity with legal support. We have also provided legal trainings to the WSCAH staff.

Queens: Fighting for Asian American New Yorkers - We recently launched a new project with advocacy organization Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE), a CBO that works to address the needs of and bias against people of Asian descent in the borough. LSNYC is conducting regular KYR clinics and legal advice sessions with AAFE clients on housing rights and other topics.

Brooklyn: Supporting Asylum Seekers and their Rights - We joined the Eastern Brooklyn Emergency Collaborative on a major initiative to provide legal information sessions for newly arrived asylum seekers. These sessions, delivered with cultural competence and in Spanish, cover a wide array of essential information for immigrant families.

Staten Island: Ensuring Due Process for Homeowners - In Staten Island, low-income homeowners faced overly aggressive action by the Department of Buildings with respect to the imposition and enforcement of building code violations and related penalties. An unfair process and mounting penalties put these homeowners at risk of losing their homes. We participated in a new working group of legal services organizations from around New York City to ensure that homeowners receive adequate notice of and time to remedy these violations, and that the penalties are neither excessive nor arbitrarily enforced.

The Bronx: The Intersection of Health & Legal Services - We formed a new partnership in late 2022 with Urban Health Plan, a community health provider with sites throughout the borough and the city. This medical-legal partnership between our organizations helps to address the social determinants of health outcomes through legal work and litigation.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Legal Services NYC received
\$126,550,908
 in total funding this past year

IOLA Grant	\$5,040,000
City and County	\$52,525,242
Foundations	\$4,500,256
Federal	\$18,551,895
Fundraising	\$2,463,901
State Funding	\$20,140,444
Other	\$23,329,170
Total	\$126,550,908

