

2023
Annual Report

ACCELERATING JUSTICE.



OHIO ACCESS TO
JUSTICE FOUNDATION

ACCELERATING POSITIVE *CHANGE*

FOR OHIO’S *WORKFORCE,* *COMMUNITIES, AND FAMILIES*

From workforce development and community stabilization to individual stories of success, the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation drives access to justice across the diverse landscape of Ohio.

Each Foundation grant, initiative, and innovation accelerates the pace of positive change, paving the path toward a more just and equitable Ohio. We’re accelerating access. We’re accelerating impact.

[We’re accelerating justice.](#)



The Foundation’s Justice for All Summer Clerks at a learning retreat at Barnes & Thornburg LLP.

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WHO WE ARE

We are the state’s access to justice entity. Our mission is to **improve access to justice** and ensure that legal aid societies and other resources, programs, and services **address the unmet civil legal needs of low-income and underserved Ohioans.**

WHAT WE DO

We **innovate, convene, and fund** organizations, programs, and services in the civil legal arena. We **steward statutory funding** and develop additional resources to **support access to justice and civil legal work.**

WHY WE DO IT

We are **committed to building brighter, financially stable futures** for Ohioans, our communities, and our great state.

ACCELERATING JUSTICE.

STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE

Ohio's economy flourishes when employers have access to a qualified and reliable workforce. Foundation grants help Ohioans remove barriers to employment.

From sealing and expunging records to obtaining work permits, the Foundation's funding supports work that enables Ohioans to improve job prospects, maintain employment, and earn promotions.

Helping Ohioans remove barriers to employment to access brighter, more prosperous futures

A valid driver's license is necessary to participate in Ohio's economy, particularly in rural areas. The Ohio Justice Bus travels the state to help low-income Ohioans with suspended licenses get back on the road so they can get to work safely and reliably. The Bus pairs Ohioans seeking to reinstate their driver's licenses with volunteer lawyers and community partners like legal aid. These volunteer lawyers help Ohioans navigate the driver's license reinstatement process, ultimately putting more workers back on track to stable employment.

In addition, the Ohio Justice Bus connects Ohioans seeking to seal or expunge criminal records with volunteer lawyers. Removing barriers to employment opens doors to better jobs, higher wages, and brighter futures for Ohio workers and creates a more robust workforce for Ohio employers.



Volunteer attorney Aliah Hasan helps a client at an Ohio Justice Bus record sealing clinic in partnership with the Columbus Urban League.

4,091

Foundation grantees helped 4,091 Ohioans applying to seal or expunge criminal records or reinstate driver's licenses to improve employment prospects.

331

Foundation grantees helped 331 Afghans secure work permits.

Providing immigration and employment support to Afghan allies

In 2021, thousands of Afghans who supported the United States military were evacuated to the U.S. as part of our nation's exit from Afghanistan. The Foundation funded efforts to support Afghan evacuees by addressing their civil legal needs.

Through the Foundation's innovative grant program funded by the state, civil legal service providers partner with resettlement agencies to help Afghans obtain work permits so they can work to support their families and contribute to Ohio's economy. Grantees also help stabilize Afghan families by representing them in asylum or Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications, allowing them to live in the U.S. permanently. When allies step up to support our nation—at great risk to themselves and their families—we're proud to offer them our unyielding support.



From left, Shabib Luden, from Foundation grantee Community Refugee and Immigration Services, with Sharifullah Mohammadi, Rahmat Gul Safi, Heyatullah Kamawaal, and Gul Zada Safi at Fab Glass and Mirror in Columbus, an employer committed to hiring Afghan refugees.

ACCELERATING JUSTICE. STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE

Fueling whole-life recovery, starting with a clean slate

The grace of a clean slate has the power to change lives for good. Just ask *Dionne Lucas, a young working mother in long-term recovery from a substance use disorder who finally found the courage to leave a bad marriage and start a new life with her three children.

Despite making great strides in her sobriety and good choices for her family's well-being, Ms. Lucas struggled to make ends meet. She was ready to give a new job her all, but employers were hesitant to hire her because of her past drug charges. With critical state General Revenue Fund dollars, the Foundation created a grant program that assists with legal issues arising as a result of substance use disorders. Armed with a grant from the Foundation, legal aid helped Ms. Lucas seal her misdemeanor criminal records, freeing her to find a better paying job and move her and her children's lives forward.

*Name and photo have been changed to protect client privacy.

"Thanks to the generosity of the Ohio Legislature, the Foundation is able to fund critical legal work that helps Ohioans meet their full potential after battling substance use disorder and that supports Ohio in meeting its growing workforce needs."

– **Angie Lloyd**
executive director, Ohio Access to Justice Foundation

148,749

Legal aid served 148,749 Ohioans, helping them live safer, more secure, financially stable lives.



Forging life-changing pathways to safety and self-sufficiency

When Ohioans take brave steps toward safer, more sustainable lives, they shouldn't have to manage it alone. When *Shauna Trenton mustered the courage to divorce her abusive husband, she sought refuge in a domestic violence shelter. When it became clear that her husband was attempting to use the divorce process to continue his abuse, she sought legal help.

Ms. Trenton's legal aid attorney helped her settle the matter and ensured that she received her portion of her husband's pension—a life-changing \$160,000 that enabled her to move into a new apartment, settle her debts, return to her nursing career, and obtain shared custody of her teenage son. Courage like Ms. Trenton's deserves support. The Foundation is proud to fund legal services that enable safety and self-sufficiency for domestic violence survivors.

*Name and photo have been changed to protect client privacy.

5,177

Legal aid helped 5,177 domestic violence survivors seeking safety and security.



ACCELERATING JUSTICE.

IMPROVING COMMUNITIES

ACCELERATING JUSTICE

Ohioans make their communities thrive. Whether in Appalachia or urban Youngstown, the Foundation funds lawyers who work with communities to build wealth, revitalize neighborhoods, and create investment opportunities statewide.

From funding community economic development efforts to grant programs supporting special populations like veterans, the Foundation's work strengthens communities throughout the state.



From left, Donna Peake, Jerry Hill, Felicia Hill, Darsheel Kaur, and amaha sellassie at Gem City Market, a CED project supported by legal aid and the Foundation.

Stimulating economic development through neighborhood revitalization

The Foundation's award-winning Neighborhood Stabilization Grant Program helps Ohio's legal aids catalyze community economic development (CED). CED projects have achieved everything from transforming a historic building into a business hub that fuels job growth and economic development in southeastern Ohio to helping community members open an employee-owned coffee shop in downtown Columbus. The Foundation's Neighborhood Stabilization Grant Program funds Ohio's legal aids to work in communities to create jobs, improve neighborhoods, and change lives.



From left, Foundation team members Attiyya Toure, Angie Lloyd, Camille Gill, and Jennifer Rieman with Philanthropy Ohio's Deborah Aubert Thomas (center) at the Philanthropy Forward conference. The Foundation received the nonprofit's prestigious 2023 Philanthropy Innovation Award for its Neighborhood Stabilization Grant Program.



Legal aid supports neighbors in Dayton who hope to repurpose a cleaned-up superfund site into a solar farm. Photo by Jim Noelker, courtesy of the Dayton Daily News.

Leveraging clean energy to improve neighborhoods

Partners in western Ohio are working together to change the narrative around a superfund site near Dayton. Originally abandoned due to hazardous waste pollutants, neighbors want to see the revitalized land reused as a solar farm. The Foundation's Neighborhood Stabilization Grant Program is funding legal aid to support the neighbors in developing a project that will generate clean, affordable energy for the entire community, reducing power costs and improving the environment.

Legal aid helped to identify the superfund site owner and collaborated with government officials to advocate for the solar project. In addition, they helped one of the local groups incorporate as a nonprofit in order to enhance the neighbors' impact. With the site clean-up now complete, the City of Dayton is exploring ways to honor the community members' wishes to transform what was once a hazardous eyesore into a place of hope and renewal.



3,729

Legal aid helped 3,729 veterans with legal challenges.

Offering housing stability for veterans and their families

When someone risks it all to defend their country, they shouldn't have to worry about keeping a roof over their head. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Navy veteran Josiah Franklin,* a union millwright, was laid off several times due to a lack of production work. When he fell behind on his VA loan payments, Mr. Franklin, his wife, and their four children faced foreclosure.

Thanks to critical General Revenue Fund dollars, the Foundation funds a grant program targeting low-income veterans with legal issues. With this funding, legal aid stepped in and helped Mr. Franklin save his family home by obtaining mortgage assistance through Ohio's Save the Dream program and modifying his mortgage payments with his lender. As a result, Mr. Franklin and his family remain stable and secure.

*Name and photo have been changed to protect client privacy.



“We serve expectant and new mothers in a variety of ways, providing support to ensure their basic needs—like healthy stable housing, reliable income, and personal safety in their homes and relationships—are met.”

– **Marie Curry**
 managing attorney, Community Legal Aid

Reducing infant mortality in Ohio communities

Embedding legal aid lawyers on-site at hospitals and medical offices can improve patient health, medical outcomes, and provide cost savings to the healthcare system. Lawyers have a special skillset to redress problems impacting social determinants of health that better positions families to be healthy and successful. The Foundation supports this work around the state. In Summit County, for example, legal aid lawyers partner with community nonprofits to reduce infant mortality.

Through this innovative program, legal aid attorneys train community health workers to identify mothers and families who would benefit from access to civil legal services to address problems like housing instability, domestic violence, and consumer debt. By resolving these issues, mothers and families stabilize their lives which, in turn, improves health outcomes for both the mom and her baby. The model is so successful that it was recently expanded to Mahoning and Stark Counties, helping hundreds of women stabilize themselves so that their growing families can thrive.

ACCELERATING JUSTICE.

STABILIZING FAMILIES

For Ohio families striving for a better life, the Foundation catalyzes traditional and innovative civil legal work to meet their legal needs.

Throughout Ohio, families are able to escape domestic violence, preserve their family homes, and so much more by accessing legal services funded by the Foundation.

772,082

Ohio Legal Help served 772,082 Ohioans.

Overcoming opioid devastation through kinship caregiving

As the opioid crisis in Ohio devastated families, extended family members across the state stepped up to keep nieces, nephews, and grandchildren out of the foster care system through kinship care arrangements. Foundation grantee, Ohio Legal Help, developed a new resource for these kinship caregivers to help them navigate court processes and secure available benefits.

Kinship caregivers who visit Ohio Legal Help can find free lawyer-curated information on enrolling children in school, accessing medical care, arranging custody agreements, and more. Ohio Legal Help's site helps kinship caregivers make informed decisions and connect with legal and community resources to support Ohio's children.

\$7,779,033

Legal aid put \$7,779,033 back in the pockets of low-income Ohioans.



“Untangling” titles to preserve family homes for generations

Homeownership is a catalyst for security and generational wealth. For low-income families, the dream of building wealth is lost if they don't have legal title to their home. A “tangled title” exists where a home has no legally established owner, usually because an original owner failed to make arrangements to legally transfer the property upon their death. Descendants often live in the property without any legal ownership rights. Too often, this means that they get all the burdens of home ownership, the repair costs, and the tax bills, without the benefit of accruing equity or qualifying for a home equity line of credit.

In 2023, the Foundation funded a project in southwest Ohio to mobilize volunteer lawyers to help low-income Ohioans resolve tangled titles and thereby claim the rights and benefits of home ownership. Through this project and similar work supported by the Foundation around Ohio, families not only achieve home ownership, but are also able to legally transfer their homes to family members when they pass. In this way, families can secure their homes and build intergenerational wealth.



ACCELERATING JUSTICE. STABILIZING FAMILIES

Giving Afghan families much-needed safety and security in Ohio

After a terrifying escape from the Taliban, Ahmad Ahmadzai* and his family sought safe relocation in Ohio. A security guard by training in his native Afghanistan, Mr. Ahmadzai joined the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan in 2020. When the Taliban began searching Mr. Ahmadzai's village for people working with the U.S. government, he and his family fled—first to Kabul and ultimately to the United States.

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Foundation recognized that families like the Ahmadzais would require legal assistance to seek permanent status in the United States. With support from the Foundation's Immigration Legal Services for Afghans grant program, legal aid helped Mr. Ahmadzai apply for asylum, which was granted in the fall of 2023. Because of the life-changing civil legal help he received, Mr. Ahmadzai and his family are thriving Ohio residents and on a path to U.S. citizenship.

*Name and photo have been changed to protect client privacy.

“Ohio is pleased to welcome these individuals into the United States. Governor DeWine has asked us to find ways to help new arrivals as they find a new home and new life and this project has proven to be a tremendous success for these families.”

– **Matt Damschroder**
director, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services



2,731

Foundation grantees helped 2,731 Afghans seeking safety and stability in the U.S.



“This was a chance to meet a wonderful parent, and to provide a small bit of help so that she could continue to provide a loving home, protection, care, and support for her daughter.”

– **Gretchen Lipari**
volunteer attorney,
Legal Aid of Southeast
and Central Ohio

Ensuring families have support to care for vulnerable family members

For parents of permanently disabled children, the transition into adulthood can be terrifying. Megan* lives with extensive intellectual and developmental disabilities as a result of her premature birth. Megan is non-verbal and unable to walk independently. She cannot care for herself and relies on her mother to oversee both her daily and her medical needs. When Megan turned 18, her doctors could no longer work with her mother to provide appropriate medical care for Megan.

10,702

Legal aid helped 10,702 Ohioans with disabilities address civil legal problems.

Through a medical-legal partnership, Kathy Russell*, Megan's mom, was connected with legal aid and its volunteer attorney program. A volunteer attorney helped Ms. Russell obtain guardianship of Megan so that she can continue to care for her and work with Megan's medical team to ensure that she can live the healthiest and most fulfilling life possible in light of her condition.

*Name and photo have been changed to protect client privacy.

JUSTICE FOR ALL FELLOWS

Justice for All Fellows are new attorneys funded by the Foundation to develop and execute two-year projects to address urgent legal problems facing low-income and underserved Ohioans.



Hannah Bogaert
Legal Aid Society
of Greater Cincinnati



Russell Hauser
The Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland



Sarah Kolick
The Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland



Zachary Lemaster
Legal Aid of Western Ohio



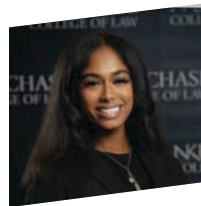
Magda Phillips
The Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland



Ashley Ward
Ohio Justice and Policy Center

JUSTICE FOR ALL SUMMER CLERKS

Justice for All Summer Clerks are law students funded by the Foundation to expand opportunities to work in civil legal services.



Jillian Fletcher
Pro Seniors



Kailyn Gullatt
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality



Veronica Hodges
Legal Aid of Southeast
and Central Ohio



Maya Kapur
The Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland



Miracle Onuoha
LegalWorks



Nakoci Shaw
Disability Rights Ohio



Anaka Young
Legal Aid Society
of Greater Cincinnati

2023 FOUNDATION HONOREES

Voice of Justice Award

State Senator Matt Dolan received the Foundation's Voice of Justice Award for his contribution to the timely and effective distribution of federal funds to ensure Ohioans had access to critical financial resources during the pandemic.

From left, Foundation Board President Jennifer Day, Senator Matt Dolan, Foundation Executive Director Angie Lloyd



Denis J. Murphy Award

Wayne Sarna, staff attorney at Community Legal Aid, received the Foundation's Denis J. Murphy Award for his innovative lawyering strategies in bankruptcy and consumer law and his stalwart advocacy for low-income Ohioans struggling with debt-related civil legal challenges.

From left, Angie Lloyd, Wayne Sarna, Foundation Board member Bill Dowling



Presidential Award

Misty Connors, volunteer attorney at Legal Aid of Western Ohio, received the Foundation's Presidential Award for her sustained commitment to access to justice and her remarkable pro bono service to more than 160 low-income rural Ohioans and their families.

From left, Angie Lloyd, Misty Connors, Jennifer Day



GRANTS & DISBURSEMENTS

to Civil Legal Service Providers



\$6,381,497



\$4,982,327



\$3,874,668



\$3,385,599



\$7,620,361



\$750,487



\$625,000



\$328,372



\$171,000



\$125,000



\$108,500



\$100,750



\$100,750



\$87,167



\$76,000



\$70,500



\$64,500



\$53,316



\$50,500



\$29,771

Other Civil Legal Service Nonprofits

\$10,667

TOTAL AWARDED: \$28,996,732

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS OF JUNE 30, 2023

ASSETS

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Current Assets | \$9,264,096 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 8,367,423 |
| Accounts receivable | 838,347 |
| Prepaid expenses and other current assets | 58,326 |
| Investments | \$20,771,792 |
| Property and equipment | \$76,905 |
| Equipment | 24,919 |
| Vehicles | 116,553 |
| Furniture and fixtures | 20,756 |
| Computer software | 25,100 |
| Leasehold improvements | 18,117 |
| Less: accumulated depreciation | (128,540) |
| Other Assets | |
| Operating leases right-of-use assets | 663,536 |
| Total Assets | \$30,776,329 |

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Current Liabilities | \$6,447,794 |
| Accounts payable | 89,501 |
| Grants payable | 1,072,711 |
| Accrued liabilities | 182,702 |
| Conditional contribution advance | 5,000,000 |
| Operating lease liability current portion | 102,880 |
| Noncurrent liabilities | \$597,756 |
| Operating lease liability, less current portion | 597,756 |
| Net Assets | \$23,730,779 |
| Without donor restrictions | 22,196,347 |
| With donor restrictions | 1,534,432 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | \$30,776,329 |

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

| | WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS | WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Revenue and Support | | | |
| Access to Justice Foundation Fund | 6,726,329 | 87,777 | 6,814,106 |
| Ohio Supreme Court grant | 425,000 | - | 425,000 |
| Other grants | 784,514 | 4,000 | 788,514 |
| Other income and contributions | 140,104 | - | 140,104 |
| Investment returns, net | 1,966,479 | - | 1,966,479 |
| Net assets released from restrictions | 1,245,909 | (1,245,909) | - |
| Total revenue and support | \$11,288,335 | (\$1,154,132) | \$10,134,203 |
| Expenses | | | |
| Program services | | | |
| Pro bono | 190,286 | - | 190,286 |
| Legal services support | 7,853,185 | - | 7,853,185 |
| Public funds compliance | 288,301 | - | 288,301 |
| Ohio Justice Bus | 215,880 | - | 215,880 |
| Grant administration | 259,311 | - | 259,311 |
| Management and general | 414,164 | - | 414,164 |
| Fundraising | 61,902 | - | 61,902 |
| Total expenses | \$9,283,029 | - | \$9,283,029 |
| Change in net assets | \$2,005,306 | (\$1,154,132) | \$851,174 |
| Net assets — beginning of year | \$20,191,041 | \$2,688,564 | \$22,879,605 |
| Net assets — end of year | \$22,196,347 | \$1,534,432 | \$23,730,779 |

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