

# Justice Opens Doors.

Justice is a defining factor in opening doors to better jobs, more stable families, and financial security. It transforms uncertainty into security and potential into progress. Justice is more than a concept—it’s a catalyst. It fuels opportunities that ensure everyone can succeed.

Access to justice makes opportunity and stability attainable for all Ohioans. Resolving civil justice barriers allows individuals to prosper, families to build security, and communities to grow stronger. At the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation, we champion access to justice as the key that opens doors to a brighter future for all.

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 low-income Ohioans**, our communities, and our great state.



FOUNDATION  
STAFF GATHER FOR A  
TEAM-BUILDING EVENT.

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# Opening Doors for Ohio's Workforce.

When the economy works for everyone, all Ohioans benefit. The Foundation's funding provides legal services for Ohioans eager to join, re-enter, and advance within the workforce. With support from the Foundation, our legal aid grantees create new pathways to employment, opening doors to opportunity, second chances, and brighter futures.

## Fueling Transformational Career Opportunities

Ohioans who have turned their lives around shouldn't be forever burdened by past mistakes. Jacquelyn Gaiman was working hard to support herself and her children; however, she struggled to find gainful employment due to a past criminal record. As she juggled being a single parent with low-wage, temporary jobs, Ms. Gaiman realized that she needed to do more. She reached out to a specialty legal aid, which helped seal her criminal record.

With her prior records sealed, Ms. Gaiman was free to accomplish an impressive list of achievements. She secured full-time employment, earned a bachelor's degree, and purchased a home. Ms. Gaiman now serves on the board of the nonprofit that helped seal her records, eager to give back to the organization that catalyzed her life's remarkable transformation.



**“Once my record was sealed, my life took off. I was able to purchase a home, obtain a full-time job, and boost my credit score. These past four years have been very productive and financially rewarding.”**

JACQUELYN GAIMAN



5,675

LEGAL AID HELPED 5,675 OHIOANS APPLYING TO SEAL OR EXPUNGE CRIMINAL RECORDS OR REINSTATE DRIVER'S LICENSES TO IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS.

## Launching Ohioans into Better-Paying Jobs

Sometimes a second chance is all that's needed for a fresh start. Tanny Gentry\* loves caring for others. She works at a hospital and volunteers with the Red Cross in her free time. Ms. Gentry was eager to advance her career and become a nurse; however, a prior criminal record made her ineligible for a nursing license.

Ready to help Ms. Gentry improve both her job and housing prospects, the Foundation's Justice for All Fellow Ashley Ward stepped in to assist. Attorney Ward shepherded Ms. Gentry through the Ohio Governor's Expedited Pardon Project and helped seal her prior criminal record. As a result, Ms. Gentry has a fresh start through which she plans to enter nursing school, increase her income potential, and better support her family.



THE KOVALENKO\* FAMILY

## Providing New Ohioans with Opportunities for Work

After a terrifying escape from Odesa, Ukraine during the Russian invasion, Olena and Victor Kovalenko,\* along with their young son, sought safe relocation in Ohio. The Kovalenkos were eager to escape the war and build a safe and secure future for their family. In partnership with the Ohio Legislature, the Foundation recognized that families like the Kovalenkos would need legal assistance to stabilize themselves in the United States. With support from the Foundation's Ukrainian Legal Services Grant Program, a specialty legal aid helped the Kovalenkos stabilize their immigration status and their ability to work in the U.S.

Because of the life-changing civil legal help they received, the Kovalenkos are thriving in their new home. Mr. Kovalenko is supporting the family and studying to obtain his Commercial Driver's License. The Kovalenkos are active in their local church, their son plays football at his middle school, and the family recently welcomed a new baby.

1,979

LEGAL AID HELPED 1,979 UKRAINIANS SECURE WORK PERMITS.



# Opening Doors for Rural Ohioans.

Rural Ohioans are deeply committed to their neighbors and to the success of their communities. The Foundation funds legal services that strive to address the current rural attorney shortage and build better communities for rural residents. This effort ensures these Ohioans can access legal help, opening doors to more vibrant, self-sustaining communities.



**“People don’t think of attorneys as infrastructure for a community. But the ramifications of not having access to legal help impacts not only family stability but also the ability of rural communities to attract and keep businesses.”**

KRISTEN LEWIS  
RURAL ADVOCACY DIRECTOR,  
LEGAL AID OF SOUTHEAST AND CENTRAL OHIO

5,974

LEGAL AID HELPED 5,974 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS SEEKING SAFETY AND SECURITY.

## Addressing the Attorney Shortage in Rural Ohio

Guardians ad litem (GALs) play a crucial role in protecting children by representing their best interests in court cases. It’s up to these professionals to determine whether children can be safe and supported in their homes. However, the number of private attorneys working in rural Ohio has declined, leaving some rural communities without this vital legal resource.

Recognizing that GALs are crucial to ensuring courts have independent information about a child’s best interest, legal aid in southeastern Ohio developed an innovative solution to address the GAL shortage. By training its staff attorneys to serve as GALs, southeast Ohio will have seven new certified GALs by the end of 2025 to ensure that more children achieve safety and stability.



LEGAL AID AND VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS AT AN OHIO JUSTICE BUS WILLS CLINIC IN HANCOCK COUNTY.

## Delivering Legal Services Close to Home

With fewer attorneys settling in rural Ohio, seniors often lack access to critical legal help. To support rural Ohio seniors, the Ohio Justice Bus travels throughout Ohio to counties like Auglaize, Erie, Harrison, and Medina, offering low-income seniors personalized estate planning services.

Volunteer attorneys on the Ohio Justice Bus help seniors prepare and execute wills and advance directives. This effort puts seniors’ minds at ease, knowing their final healthcare decisions will be respected and that their assets will be transferred according to their wishes.

70%

THE OHIO JUSTICE BUS HELD 70% OF ITS CLINICS IN RURAL COUNTIES.



A RENDERING OF THE PROPOSED SENIOR HOUSING COMMUNITY IN GREENE COUNTY.

## Developing Affordable Housing Solutions

Ohio’s seniors deserve to retire to a comfortable, safe, affordable home. Through its Neighborhood Stabilization Grant Program, the Foundation is proud to partner with Ohio’s legal aids on community economic development initiatives that advance affordable housing for low-income Ohioans. In Greene County, legal aid is providing critical legal services to a community land trust that is developing affordable senior housing.

The new community will foster independence and provide a safe and supportive retirement for low-income seniors in Greene County. The new housing will include amenities such as shared outdoor green spaces and essential support services. Best of all, this innovative community land trust model ensures that the housing will remain affordable for senior residents for decades to come.

# Opening Doors for Ohio's Veterans.

Having served our country, Ohio veterans deserve our unwavering support. For many veterans, civil legal issues impair their ability to transition successfully to civilian life. The Foundation is honored to partner with the Supreme Court of Ohio and the Ohio Legislature to fund civil legal services for Ohio's low-income veterans. The Foundation supports Ohio's legal aids in providing tailored legal services to meet veterans' unique needs in benefits, housing, healthcare, and consumer issues, opening doors to secure and fulfilling lives.

## Securing Housing Stability for Senior Veterans

When someone risks it all to defend their country, they shouldn't have to worry about having a place to call home. Navy veteran Isaiah Jackson\* was proud to own his home, but when his disability kept him from working, Mr. Jackson fell behind on his mortgage. Facing foreclosure, Mr. Jackson started selling his treasured possessions in an attempt to keep a roof over his head.

The Foundation's veterans grant program funded legal aid to help Mr. Jackson save his home. By establishing that Mr. Jackson's home qualified for the VA moratorium on foreclosures, legal aid was able to create time for Mr. Jackson to access disability benefits with back pay. Legal aid then worked with Mr. Jackson's lender to modify his mortgage payments. The foreclosure was dismissed, and today, Mr. Jackson is stable and secure in his home.



12,872

LEGAL AID HELPED 12,872 OHIOANS FACING EVICTION OR FORECLOSURE.



DERICK YOUNG  
DIRECTOR, MAHONING  
COUNTY HONOR COURT

**“Legal aid has proven to be an invaluable resource for the veterans we serve. Their diligence and dedication in assisting our nation’s heroes in matters outside our court’s jurisdiction plays a vital role in helping restore honor to our veterans.”**

3,764

LEGAL AID HELPED 3,764 VETERANS.

## Ensuring Financial Stability for Our Nation's Defenders

Serving in the U.S. military comes at a high cost to many service members, and our veterans deserve to be financially secure when they come home. Thomas Walsh,\* an Air Force veteran, was exposed to Agent Orange when serving in the Vietnam War. As a result of his exposure, Mr. Walsh experienced a series of challenging medical conditions. Mr. Walsh applied to the VA for service-related benefits due to these Agent Orange-related medical conditions, but because he had been stationed in Thailand, the VA initially denied his claim.

Mr. Walsh's legal aid attorney, funded through the Foundation's grant program, successfully challenged the VA's denial of benefits with newly discovered information establishing that the U.S. military had designated multiple air bases in Thailand for likely Agent Orange exposure. The VA significantly increased Mr. Walsh's monthly benefits and awarded him a back payment of \$10,800. Now, Mr. Walsh is enjoying his remaining years with financial stability.

## Supporting Veterans' Long-Term Success

Helping justice-involved veterans thrive requires a multi-pronged approach that considers all aspects of their well-being. In Youngstown, legal aid works with the Mahoning County Honor Court to resolve civil legal issues to help veterans succeed. Veterans participating in the Honor Court receive personalized services from legal aid and other community partners to ensure that they complete the Honor Court program and have a second chance at a new life.



# Opening Doors for Ohio's Families.

Strong families are the backbone of a thriving Ohio. The Foundation funds innovative civil legal services that preserve family homes, ensure children's safety and security, and help families improve their financial standing, opening doors to health, educational success, and generational stability.



**“When fathers are more involved with their kids, they’re much more apt to pay child support and to try to be financially responsible. Getting fathers involved seems to have a ripple effect on promoting family stability.”**

JOHN PETIT  
FORMER MANAGING ATTORNEY,  
COMMUNITY LEGAL AID

177,195

LEGAL AID SERVED 177,195 OHIOANS,  
HELPING THEM LIVE SAFER, MORE SECURE,  
FINANCIALLY STABLE LIVES.

## Re-Engaging Fathers Through Regular Visitation

Children benefit from both parents being involved in their lives. However, fathers, particularly non-custodial fathers, often encounter barriers to visitation with their children.

In northeast Ohio, legal aid collaborates with community partners to help non-custodial parents establish regular visitation. By helping non-custodial fathers complete the work necessary to qualify for visitation, legal aid improves children's lives by re-engaging fathers and re-establishing family stability.



## Increasing Information and Access to Ohio's Courts

Family law challenges such as divorce, child custody, and child support can be overwhelming. Private lawyers can be expensive and legal aid's funding is limited, so many individuals are forced to navigate the legal system on their own. To address the growing needs of self-represented parties and to ensure that Ohioans have resources that are both lawyer-curated and user-friendly, Foundation grantee Ohio Legal Help has developed virtual self-help centers in Montgomery and Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Courts.

Supported by the Supreme Court of Ohio and the Foundation, this innovative virtual platform not only helps families struggling with legal issues access critical information about court procedures and forms, but it also allows them to complete the court documents that are necessary to resolve their problems. These virtual self-help centers also enable Ohio's courts to run more efficiently. Most importantly, they make navigating the legal process more accessible and less intimidating for Ohioans eager to resolve their family law matters. Ohio Legal Help hopes to replicate this successful model in courts throughout Ohio.

757,525

OHIO LEGAL HELP SERVED 757,525 OHIOANS.

4,710

LEGAL AID HELPED 4,710 OHIOANS WITH LEGAL  
ISSUES RELATED TO SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS.



## Empowering Ohio's Grandparents

When biological parents are unable to fulfill their parental duty due to substance use, grandparents like Stewart Carmichael\* step in to help the grandchildren they love. Mr. Carmichael was eager to provide his grandson Jesse\* with care and stability. With Jesse's father in prison and his mother struggling with substance use, homelessness, and mental health issues, Mr. Carmichael was willing to do whatever was necessary to help his grandson.

Thanks to state General Revenue Fund dollars, the Foundation funds a grant program to address legal issues related to substance use disorders. With help from this grant, legal aid helped Mr. Carmichael file and obtain custody of Jesse. Mr. Carmichael can now ensure that Jesse lives in a stable and loving home and has the resources he needs to thrive.



Pro Bono Summit

The Foundation hosted a statewide Pro Bono Summit and gathered stakeholders across Ohio to identify and develop innovative ideas to increase pro bono volunteerism.



**From Left:** Foundation Executive Director Angie Lloyd, Supreme Court of Ohio Chief Justice Sharon Kennedy, Foundation General Counsel & Chief Operating Officer Kiko Yee.

**From Left:** Molly Russell, Jocelyn Armstrong, Shauna Hill, and Asafu Suzuki.



**Above:** Attendees worked together to brainstorm solutions to pro bono challenges at the Summit.

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.

- Dunia Aliyo**  
Community Refugee and Immigration Services
- Vinny Boraggina**  
Legal Aid of Western Ohio
- Santiago Garcia-Mata**  
Legal Aid of Southeast & Central Ohio
- Michelle Hampton**  
Pro Seniors
- Aubrianna Jones**  
Equality Ohio
- Maya Kapur**  
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
- Lauren Wall**  
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality
- Kanisha West-Thomas**  
LegalWorks

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  
Hannah provides holistic legal services to survivors of sexual assault.
- **Colin Kolodziej**  
Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati  
Colin provides individual legal representation to low-income consumers who are victims of predatory and fraudulent auto lending and sales practices.
- **Zachary Lemaster**  
Legal Aid of Western Ohio  
Zachary provides holistic legal services to mothers experiencing domestic violence in rural areas.
- **Kaela Orrell**  
Catholic Charities Corp. (Diocese of Cleveland)  
Kaela provides representation for unaccompanied minors in court.
- **Ashley Ward**  
Ohio Justice and Policy Center  
Ashley provides civil legal services to Ohioans impacted by the criminal legal system while educating the public about housing barriers for Ohioans with criminal records.
- **Katrice Williams**  
Ohio Legal Help  
Katrice creates accessible and user-centered legal content, forms, and tools for formerly incarcerated individuals facing civil legal challenges.

2024 Foundation Honorees



**Voice of Justice Award**  
**Rep. Kevin Miller** received the Voice of Justice Award for leading efforts to double the appropriation of state dollars for Ohio's legal aids from \$1 million to \$2 million over two years.



**Denis J. Murphy Award**  
Managing attorney **Mike Walters** of Pro Seniors received the Denis J. Murphy Award for his leadership and dedication to assisting older adults facing civil legal issues, personally helping over 20,000 callers to the Legal Helpline throughout his career.



**Presidential Award**  
Retired legal aid attorney **Robin Bozian** received the Presidential Award for her commitment to serving low-income Ohioans through her support and coordination of pro bono legal clinics in southeastern Ohio.

Grants and Disbursements to Civil Legal Service Providers

 <b>\$11,351,796</b>	 <b>\$9,778,539</b>	 <b>\$7,308,027</b>	 <b>\$6,271,898</b>
 <b>\$5,773,394</b>	 <b>\$1,101,946</b>	 <b>\$907,475</b>	 <b>\$298,709</b>
 <b>\$263,145</b>	 <b>\$255,575</b>	 <b>\$176,127</b>	 <b>\$169,530</b>
 <b>\$120,714</b>	 <b>\$117,398</b>	 <b>\$107,290</b>	 <b>\$96,000</b>
 <b>\$76,000</b>	 <b>\$71,049</b>	 <b>\$38,116</b>	 <b>\$18,150</b>
<b>Other Grants and Disbursements</b> <b>\$23,000</b>			

Total Awarded: **\$44,323,878**

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As of June 30, 2024

ASSETS

<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>\$8,855,299</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	7,685,065
Grants and contributions receivable	1,084,814
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	85,420
<b>Investments</b>	<b>\$28,008,276</b>
<b>Property and Equipment</b>	<b>\$64,524</b>
Vehicles	116,553
Furniture and equipment	77,942
Less accumulated depreciation	(129,971)
<b>Operating Lease Right-of-Use Assets</b>	<b>\$575,564</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$37,503,663</b>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

<b>Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$4,671,641</b>
Accounts payable	51,142
Grants payable	520,338
Conditional contribution advance	3,772,213
Accrued liabilities	220,661
Current portion of operating lease liability	107,287
<b>Noncurrent Liabilities - Lease Liabilities</b> (net of current portion)	<b>\$489,018</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$5,160,659</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$32,343,004</b>
Without donor restrictions	32,036,108
With donor restrictions	306,896
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$37,503,663</b>

Consolidated Statement of Activities

Year ended June 30, 2024

	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
<b>Revenue and Support</b>			
Access to Justice Foundation Fund	12,035,825	-	12,035,825
Ohio Supreme Court grant	425,000	-	425,000
Other grants	2,453,481	-	2,453,481
Other income and contributions	121,970	-	121,970
Investment returns, net	3,555,633	-	3,555,633
Net assets released from restrictions	1,227,535	(1,227,535)	-
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>\$19,819,444</b>	<b>(\$1,227,535)</b>	<b>\$18,591,909</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program services			
Pro bono	188,024	-	188,024
Legal services support	8,440,561	-	8,440,561
Public funds compliance	297,590	-	297,590
Ohio Justice Bus	287,008	-	287,008
Grant administration	203,776	-	203,776
Management and general	486,037	-	486,037
Fundraising	76,688	-	76,688
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$9,979,684</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$9,979,684</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$9,839,760</b>	<b>(\$1,227,535)</b>	<b>\$8,612,225</b>
<b>Net Assets — Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$22,196,348</b>	<b>\$1,534,431</b>	<b>\$23,730,779</b>
<b>Net Assets — End of Year</b>	<b>\$32,036,108</b>	<b>\$306,896</b>	<b>\$32,343,004</b>



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