CONNECTICUT LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

1977–2017

40 YEARS OF SERVICE
been deemed an international gang with members in multiple countries. Jorge, a minor, found his way to the United States after fleeing Honduras because his life was in danger. In Honduras, Jorge’s cousin served less than two years in prison before escaping. Jorge*, a minor, found his way to the United States after fleeing to the United States. When he arrived, he was threatened with deportation and was referred to Connecticut Legal Services for assistance. CLS represented him in his removal proceedings and filed a defensive asylum application on his behalf. Because of our advocacy, Jorge was granted asylum, and the removal proceedings were terminated. He is now safe in the United States and no longer fears for his life.

1990: CLS Expands for the First Time in Ten Years
After a decade of slow growth, CLS expands its services to low-income people and adds 14 attorneys, one paralegal, and six secretaries to the CLS ranks. CLS also partners with other legal services programs to launch the AIDS Legal Network of Connecticut.

Distribution of 4,971 Cases Handled Fiscal Year 2016–2017
In addition to working on individual cases, CLS conducted 218 community legal education events attended by 15,801 people and provided 19 instances of advice to human services agencies and other professionals serving the poor.

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Service Area, Offices, and Staff
Connecticut Legal Services is a private, not-for-profit law firm dedicated to improving the lives of low-income people by providing access to justice.

In the CLS service area—all of Connecticut except the Greater Hartford and New Haven areas—more than 200,000 people are financially eligible for services (2010 census).

CLS has six full-service offices, three satellite offices, and one administrative office.

On June 30, 2017, the CLS staff consisted of:
- 42.87 FTE lawyers
- 2,000 FTE paralegals
- 11.72 FTE legal assistants
- 5.5 FTE child welfare advocates
- 8.00 FTE administrative staff

Distribution of Cases
In 2016–2017, Connecticut Legal Services received approximately 15,813 requests for service. We responded by opening 2,932 new cases for legal representation and counseling. We also worked on 2,039 cases opened in previous years. CLS’s work in these 4,971 cases benefited approximately 11,600 household members.

1989: IOLTA Funding Becomes Mandatory
The state legislature passes a bill to make IOLTA contributions mandatory. CLS revenues are projected to quadruple.

1981: CLS Faces Revenue Reductions
In response to Reagan-era budget cuts, CLS closes several offices and reduces staff by 30 percent. CLS also redirects its focus to three fundamental areas of need: protection of clients’ essential rights to income, shelter, and health.

1977: The Incorporation of CLS
Fairfield County Legal Services, Legacy, the Legal Aid Board of New Britain, the Middlesex County Legal Assistance Association, the Tolland-Windham Legal Assistance Program, and Waterbury Legal Aid and Reference Services incorporate into Connecticut Legal Services, led by Roger Roesz.

1964: War on Poverty
Congress passes the Economic Opportunity Act, the beginning of President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty. For the first time, Congress makes federal money available for the poor.

1876: Birth of Legal Aid
The first legal aid agency in the United States is established to represent low-income German immigrants in civil rights cases. The agency later expands its services to all low-income people in need.
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Perspectives and Views

Education. We successfully advocated with DCF to get the children therapy to help them overcome what they had lived through. Happily, the children were adopted by an aunt and uncle, reside safely in therapy to help them overcome what they had lived through. Happily, the children were adopted by an aunt and uncle, reside safely in

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1992: Legal Services Agencies Found LARCC
CLS and other legal services agencies in Connecticut jointly found—and fund—the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, Inc. to manage staff training, client education materials, and the legislative representation of clients.

1992: Lawyers Raise Funds for CLS
CLS kicks off its first Campaign for Justice to raise funds from private attorneys to help fund CLS attorney salaries.

1995: LSCR Restrictions Lead to Creation of New Service Delivery
Congress attaches new, crippling restrictions to Legal Services Corporation funds. Threatened with the loss of major funding, legal services agencies redefine their priorities and create Statewide Legal Services to receive LSC funds and conduct centralized intake and referrals. The CLS workforce drops to a low of 38 advocates as many staffers move to SLS.

Letter from Executive Director and Board Chair

Dear Friends,

This year, Connecticut Legal Services celebrates 40 years of changing and improving lives by helping people access justice. That’s 40 years of helping individuals and families achieve stability amid crisis and 40 years of using the legal system to help

Victims of domestic violence find safety
Children achieve appropriate education plans rather than enter the criminal justice system
Families find and hold onto warm, safe housing
People of all ages access life-sustaining and life-saving health care
Elderly people regain the dignity and sense of security they lost as victims of illegal debt harassment
Immigrants understand and enforce their rights
People with intellectual disabilities live their lives with appropriate safeguards
Countless low-income people fight injustice.

Many of our staff members have been with CLS since its infancy. They selflessly saw CLS through harsh economic times, taking salary reductions to avoid layoffs when funding was especially low. The men and women of CLS put in countless hours advocating for their clients and for policies that affect their clients. They log another number of countless hours on various internal committees, always striving to help CLS be the best advocate for justice possible. Our volunteers and board give generously of their time and board.

We are optimistic going forward, even in these particularly hard times for our clients. With your support, we will continue to be a force for justice and continue to work as a low-income people can turn to when they have nowhere else to go.

Thank you for supporting CLS and the work we do.

Sincerely,

Deborah R. Witkin
Executive Director

Kevin J. Rasch
Board Chair
Financial Supporters and Other Income Sources for 2016–2017

Government Based Grants
Agency on Aging, Senior Resources
(Eastern Connecticut) $44,587
Agency on Aging, Southwestern Connecticut Area 47,477
Agency on Aging, Western Connecticut Area 54,431
City of Middletown 10,000
Community Development Block Grant Program—City of Waterbury 10,075
Community Development Block Grant Program—Town of Fairfield 4,006
Park City Communities 54,156
State of Connecticut Court Support Services 6,000
Division—Family Matters Training Program 85,806
State of Connecticut Department of Aging 715,560
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch 26,191
State of Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program 10,385
State of Connecticut Office of Protection & Advocacy 125,950
State of Connecticut Office of the Chief Public Defender 30,000
State of Connecticut Office of Victim Services 1,554,833
Town of Ashford 1,000
Town of Coventry 925
Town of Ellington 2,200
Town of Groton 8,157
Town of Mansfield 6,500
Total Government Based Grants $2,798,239

Private Grants
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut 30,000
Connecticut—Imagination Project 2,500
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut 2,500
Connecticut—Women & Girls Fund—New London 981,350
Connecticut—Women & Girls Fund—Windham 6,649,748
Community Foundation of Middlesex County (Court Fees Grants-in-Aid) 1,164,243
Total Private Grants $9,414,454

Donations and Other Income
Attorney Fees $195,069
Campaign for Justice 271,189
Donated Goods and Services 302,821
United Way Donor Designations 18,290
Other Income 630
Total Donations and Other Income $787,999
Total CLS Income $13,000,692

1997: CLS Celebrates Platinum Anniversary
CLS celebrates 20 years, determined to rebuild its staff, expand services, and fill coverage gaps caused by the JOLTA downturn and LSC funding cuts.


ASSETS
June 30, 2017 June 30, 2016
Current Assets $12,124,200 $2,185,562
Cash and Cash Equivalents—Operating Funds 1,051 2,912
Cash in Escrow—Client Funds 749,743 249,995
Certificates of Deposit 500,172 53,485
Receivables 27,813 44,759
Grants and Contracts Receivable 90,139 65,721
Promises to Give 1,486,625 1,207,849
Other Receivables 85,806 84,362
Prepaid Expenses 28,595 3,800
Total Current Assets $4,981,763 $3,810,283
Fixed Assets
Property and Equipment 580,607 506,858
Building/Leasehold Improvements 1,149,380 818,520
Total Fixed Assets 1,729,987 1,325,378
Less Accumulated Depreciation -1,106,977 -1,058,607
Total Fixed Assets $623,010 $266,772
Other Assets
Security Deposits 73,622 21,382
Total Other Assets $73,622 $21,382
Total Assets $5,908,395 $4,096,437

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
June 30, 2017 June 30, 2016
Liabilities
Accrued Pension Liability $4,711,537 $5,964,996
Accounts Payable 323,696 180,063
Accrued Expenses 99,198 41,499
Refundable Advances 376,485 60,717
Accrued Annual Leave 452,733 451,097
Client Trust Deposits 1,051 2,912
Total Liabilities $5,964,700 $6,603,078
Net Assets
Unrestricted
Undesignated—attributable to operations 607,042 780,972
Undesignated—attributable to pension liability -2,616,277 -4,311,065
Designated
Insurance Escrow 0 0
Fixed Assets 853,010 266,772
Total Unrestricted Net Assets -$1,156,225 -$3,263,321
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets 1,099,920 758,680
Total Net Assets -$56,305 -$2,504,641
Total Liabilities And Net Assets $5,908,395 $4,096,437

CLS Helps Mother Save Her Home
Mary, the mother of twin teenage boys, recently went through a very difficult divorce. One of the few assets she received was the mobile home in which she had lived with her family for more than 15 years. Mary owns her mobile home but pays a monthly rental fee to a mobile home park. After her divorce, she found paying her basic expenses difficult. Mary worked part-time while she applied for Social Security disability, but her income was so limited that she fell behind in her rent payments. She contacted Connecticut Legal Services during the final stages of her eviction case for nonpayment of rent. She had already signed an agreement in court with the mobile home park to make arrearage payments and had complied with the payment schedule. However, a few months after the agreement was signed, the mobile home park returned to court, asking that Mary be evicted for having an unauthorized occupant living in her mobile home, which would have been a breach of her rental contract. If the mobile home park proved that Mary had an unauthorized occupant living with her, she could have been evicted within days of her court hearing, and her mobile home could have been seized to cover the arrearage in full. She had the equity she had in her home. Using the objection and motion as leverage, CLS was able to negotiate with the mobile home park’s attorney to restructure Mary’s stipulated agreement so she could continue making arrearage payments and stay in her mobile home indefinitely. In May 2017, Mary made her final arrearage payment under the court agreement. She is now able to live in her mobile home without the constant threat of losing her housing and the equity in her home.
2006: IOLTA Rules Bring Increase in Funding

Superior Court judges, at the urging of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, implement new fars rules for IOLTA, which produces a substantial increase in revenue.

Barney Fund, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
Bristow Dwyer LLC
Aaron S. Bayer
Robert S. Bello
Fry Amron Bingle
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Mary Lynn Hubblitz
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Sonia Gonzalez
Katherine Grace
Ellen Geiger
Madeleine Grossman
Joy Haenlein
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Connecticut Legal Services Campaign for Justice Donor List

Partners
Sustainers
Patrons
Supporters

2005: State Funding Provides Critically Needed Revenue

Governor M. Jodi Rell adds a new funding line in the state budget to support Connecticut's legal aid programs. CLS adds four attorneys and increses its service to an additional 400 cases per year.

Marlene Bedzyk
Christopher C. Bundert
Cecilia, Tuschi & Sagartella LLC
Law Offices of Cohen & Pytraskuk, PC
Cohens and Wolfe, PC
Tara A. Craig
Deirdre Daly and Alfred Pavlis
Daniel L. Danis
The Diakon Family
Tadig Dustois
Eline G. Drummond, Esq.
Drury, Patz & Criniti, LLP
Ross Garber, Esq.
General Re Corporation Fund
Gary Gold
The Maurice Goldman Foundation
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Virginia Hamilton

CLS Helps Homeless Man Find Shelter

Joe was homeless and lived in the woods, where he was at the mercy of nighttime critters. He had a respiratory condition so severe that he periodically had to be hospitalized because of shortness of breath. Joe was referred to Connecticut Legal Services because he needed help securing disability benefits so he could find appropriate housing. Joe's attorney completed and filed the necessary paperwork, which resulted in a scheduled hearing. At the hearing, his CLS attorney was able to convince the administrative law judge that Joe was eligible for and entitled to benefits. He now receives $735 per month, which has allowed him to secure appropriate housing. Joe no longer has to sleep in the woods and can continue to manage his health.

Neil Brockwell and Corina Fronts
Janet Brooks and Alan Sinschaich
Kovan Brezhy
Douglas P. Brown
Jennifer Brown
Suzanne Callins
Mark Carta
Catherine M. Cosgrove
Christopher M. Cosgrove
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William F. Breglia
Adwin and Art Diets
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Cheryl Garman
Robert M. Godbold
Sonia Gonzalez
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Jonathan is an undocumented worker who came to Connecticut Legal Services because his employer systematically underpaid him. After repeatedly demanding payment of his unpaid wages, Jonathan threatened to file a complaint with the Department of Labor. The employer responded by calling him names, telling him that he had no rights in the United States, threatening him that he would go to jail if he filed a complaint, and threatening to call the police. The employer also destroyed evidence relating to Jonathan’s wage claim and tampered with a witness in addition to committing wage theft. If Jonathan assisted the prosecution, those colluding crimes—obstruction of justice and witness tampering—could make him eligible for U visa certification. The employer, CLS argued, had obstructed justice and tampered with a witness in addition to committing wage theft. If Jonathan assisted the prosecution, those colluding crimes—obstruction of justice and witness tampering—could make him eligible for U visa certification. Jonathan did work with the authorities, and CLS filed for EU visa on his behalf, which was granted. Jonathan was also given authorization to work, which greatly lessens his risk of wage theft and victimization at his place of work.

In 2009, Jonathan filed a lawsuit. He was represented by CLS attorneys and was eventually awarded a significant amount of unpaid wages and interest. Jonathan’s case was significant in that it was one of the first cases in Connecticut to be successful in recovering unpaid wages and interest for an undocumented worker. The case was also significant in that it helped to establish the precedent that undocumented workers have the same rights to wages and benefits as documented workers. Jonathan’s case also helped to raise awareness about the issue of wage theft against undocumented workers and the importance of providing legal representation to those workers. Jonathan’s case was a important victory for CLS and for the larger undocumented worker community in Connecticut.
Law Offices

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Bridgeport, CT 06604
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