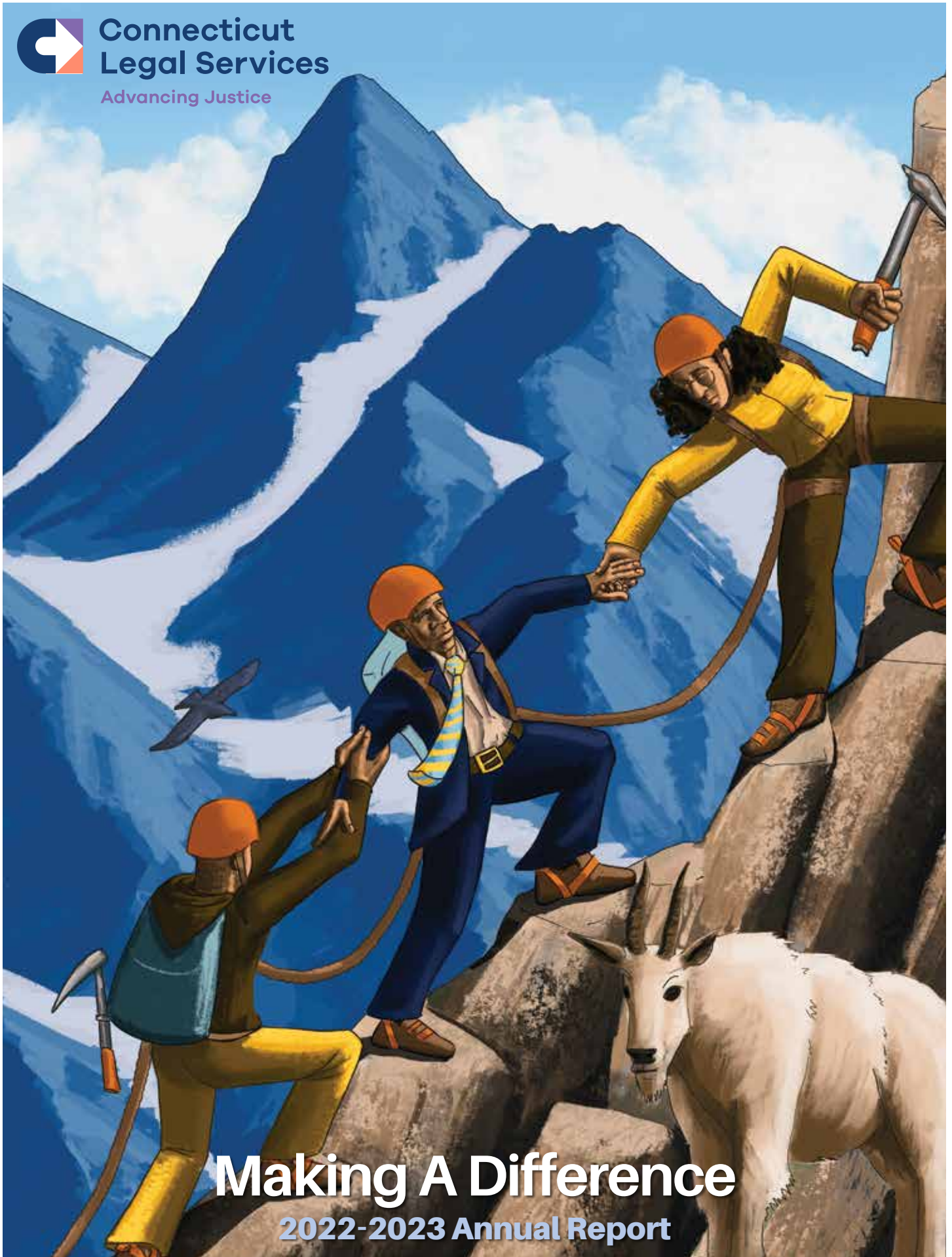




**Connecticut
Legal Services**

Advancing Justice



Making A Difference

2022-2023 Annual Report

About Us

Mission

Connecticut Legal Services provides access to justice and protects critical civil legal rights of low-income individuals and families through representation, systemic advocacy, advice, collaboration, and education.

Vision

Connecticut Legal Services believes that Connecticut can become a state in which all people are heard, are treated fairly, can meet their basic needs, and have equal opportunities to thrive.

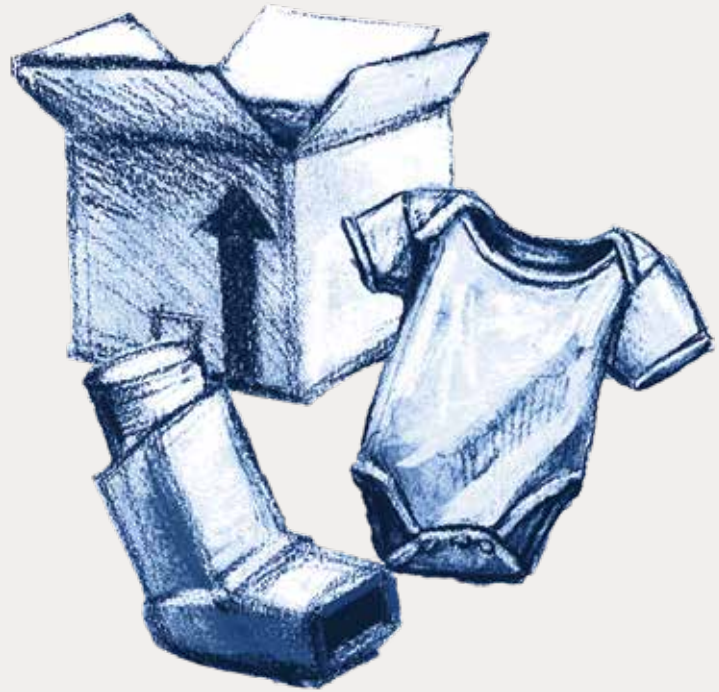
Values

At Connecticut Legal Services, we believe in

- **Justice**—We know all people are worthy of respect, compassion, fair treatment, and equal opportunity.
- **Excellence**—We strive to deliver high-quality, effective services with integrity and to continually evaluate and improve our work.
- **Empowerment**—We believe in the power of self-advocacy and strive to foster that skill in our clients and the communities we serve.
- **Racial Equity**—We strive to achieve and maintain racially equitable practices internally and in our services and interactions.
- **Commitment**—We understand that achieving our mission requires the unyielding commitment of our staff and board to our clients, to our work, and to one another.

** Names and identifying information in CLS client stories were changed to protect client confidentiality.*

Art by Corey Freer: coreyfreer.squarespace.com



▶ CASE STUDY

CLS Helps Family Avoid Homelessness

Susie* is a person with disabilities whose only source of income is from Social Security. She has three children, including twins who were born prematurely and have ongoing medical issues. Because of prior homelessness, Susie received a Section 8 voucher to subsidize her rent, which is managed by a local agency. Her current apartment has serious condition issues including a cockroach infestation that has had an adverse impact on her children, especially one twin who has asthma. Susie complained to the landlord about the conditions of the apartment and specifically asked him to take care of the cockroach infestation. The landlord, instead of resolving the issues, told Susie that he would not be renewing her lease and started an eviction action. Because of the eviction, the agency administering her Section 8 threatened to terminate her subsidy and was going to stop rental payments to the landlord. The agency had not given Susie proper notice or a hearing prior to the threat, both of which are required by law. Susie wanted to move because of the conditions of the apartment but she needed time, and without her rental subsidy, Susie and her children would be homeless again. Connecticut Legal Services advocates represented Susie in her eviction. With our help, Susie was able to secure four months in her current apartment to give her time to move with her children to a healthier environment. CLS also advocated on Susie's behalf to the agency administering her Section 8, ensuring they complied with the law and did not terminate her voucher. Now, Susie has the time and the rental subsidy she needs to move to a better apartment and avoid homelessness.

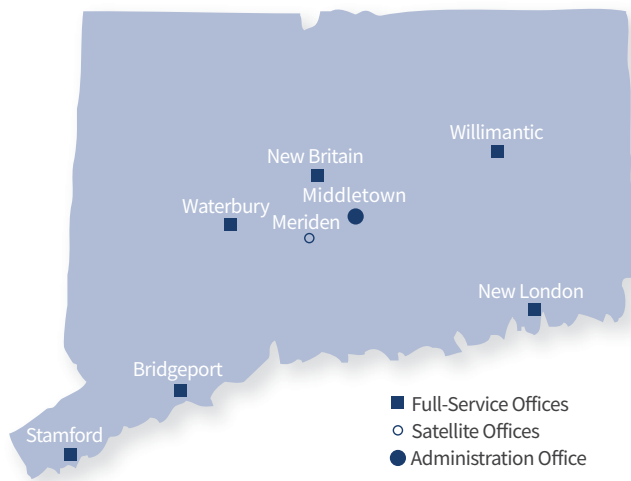
Service Area, Offices, and Staff

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 (2020 census).

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

On June 30, 2023, the CLS staff consisted of

45.80	FTE lawyers
9.80	FTE legal assistants
10.00	FTE administrative staff
1.00	FTE paralegals
.55	FTE child welfare advocates



Distribution of Cases

In 2022–2023, Connecticut Legal Services received approximately 14,806 requests for service. We responded by opening 2,296 new cases for legal representation and counseling. We also worked on 1,160 cases opened in previous years. CLS services in these 3,456 cases benefited approximately 5,518 household members, which included 2,262 children.

➤ DISTRIBUTION OF 3,456 CASES HANDLED IN FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023

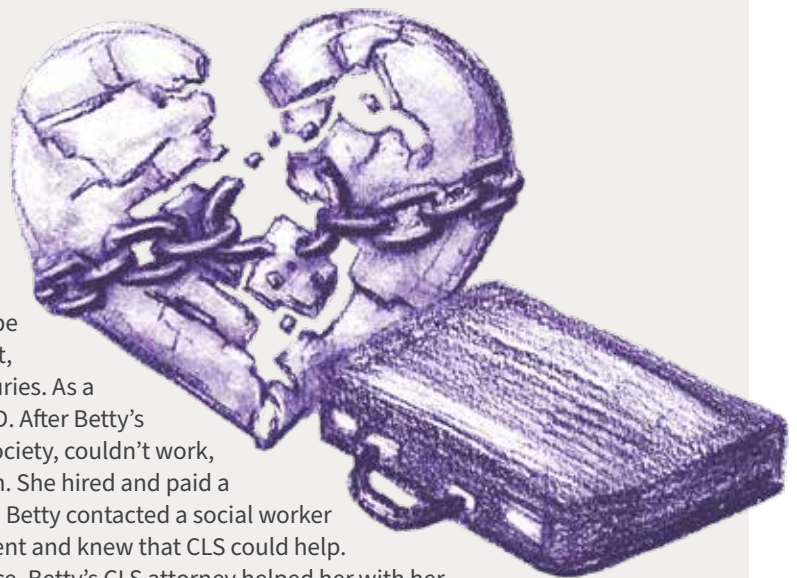
Housing and homelessness	41%
Domestic violence, divorce, child support, and other family matters	28%
Education and juvenile law	9%
Consumer (for elderly)	6%
Health law (including Medicaid, Medicare, and nursing home matters)	5%
Social Security	4%
Immigration	3%
Public Benefits and employment	2%
Intellectual Disabilities	1%
Other cases	1%

In addition to working on individual cases, CLS conducted 72 community legal education events attended by 1,372 people.

➤ CASE STUDY

CLS Helps Woman Get Disability Services

Betty is a 44 year old woman who came to Connecticut Legal Services needing help accessing disability benefits. Betty had long suffered at the hands of an abusive partner. One day, while she and her partner were in a store, she saw her chance to escape the abuse. Unfortunately, while escaping, Betty had an accident, suffering a traumatic brain injury and other serious physical injuries. As a result of that accident and years of abuse, Betty developed PTSD. After Betty's release from the hospital, she had difficulty reintegrating into society, couldn't work, and wasn't able to manage the disability application on her own. She hired and paid a private attorney who then refused to help her, and at that point, Betty contacted a social worker for help. The social worker had just attended a CLS outreach event and knew that CLS could help. The social worker contacted CLS and referred Betty for assistance. Betty's CLS attorney helped her with her application and represented her in the subsequent hearing meant to determine her eligibility for benefits. Betty's attorney made a compelling argument and the judge granted Betty's benefits as well as a significant amount of money in retroactive benefits. Betty can now receive comprehensive medical attention, financially cover her basic needs, and live free from abuse.



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Kevin Rasch, Esq.—Deputy General Counsel: Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare

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Brad Saxton, Esq.—Professor of Law and Dean Emeritus: Quinnipiac University School of Law

Michael Sullivan, Esq.—Retired Undersecretary: State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management

Thomas (Sully) C. Sullivan Jr.—Assurance Partner: PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Ann Taylor, Esq.—Retired Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer: Connecticut Children’s Medical Center



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Leslie O’Brien—Legislative Program Director: Department of Consumer Protection

Mitchell Pearlman, Esq.—Government Information Consultant; Former Executive Director: Freedom of Information Commission

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Paul A. Slager, Esq.—Partner: Silver Golub & Teitell, LLP

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Stanley Twardy Jr., Esq.—Partner: Day Pitney LLP

2022–2023 Chief Office Personnel

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Executive Director

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Deputy Director

Keith W. Boyce
Financial Director

Astrid Lebron
Director of Development

Nilda R. Havrilla
Litigation and Advocacy Director

Ashley S. Barnum
Human Resources Manager

Whit Freer
Information Technology Administrator

Letter from Executive Director and Board Chair

Dear Friends,

Your ongoing support of CLS makes a difference in the lives of our clients and we deeply appreciate it.

Many of those we serve face crises for extended periods. They might be living with little or no income, physical disabilities, illness, domestic violence, mental illness, language barriers, and/or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or gender. Simultaneously, they might be providing care for children and elderly parents. Routine tasks can seem insurmountable.

Frequently, a larger crisis strikes in the midst of these already complicated life struggles: money for food or medicine dries up; a spouse or significant other beats them; they are served an eviction notice; heat or electricity is shut off; their child is expelled; they receive a catastrophic medical diagnosis and don't have health insurance; their employer fails to pay wages due; collection agencies illegally threaten them; a nursing home kicks them out.

Often, a lawyer can help. That's where CLS comes in.

Imagine the difference your support made to John, an elderly man on the brink of eviction, when CLS helped him secure rental assistance significant enough to pay back rent and maintain future payments. Imagine the difference your support made to Sally, a nine-year-old autistic child with speech and language delays, facing the termination of her disability benefits. CLS successfully appealed that decision and secured the educational and therapeutic services to which she was entitled.

In this Annual Report, you will find numerous stories that highlight the power of your support and the many lives you've helped change.

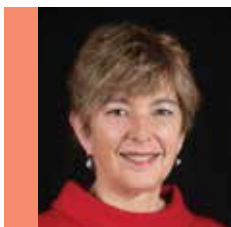
Together, you and CLS make a difference by providing access to justice (Basic Fairness), protecting and improving the lives of families and individuals (Individual Impact), and affecting change to the environment surrounding low-income people (Social Justice).

Together, we make a significant impact in our communities and on our clients' lives.

Together, we make a difference.

Thank you for your generous support.

With gratitude,



Deborah Witkin

Deborah Witkin
Executive Director



Jeffrey Plotkin

Jeffrey Plotkin, Esq.
Board Chair

Financial Support 2022-2023



Government- Based Grants		Support
Agency on Aging, Senior Resources (Eastern Connecticut)		\$55,160
Agency on Aging, Southwestern Connecticut Area		\$61,592
Agency on Aging, Western Connecticut Area		\$37,634
City of Middletown		\$10,000
Community Development Block Grant Program - Town of Fairfield		\$1,000
State of Connecticut Department of Social Services		\$566,368
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch		\$26,191
State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services		\$74,377
State of Connecticut Office of the Chief Public Defender		\$39,650
State of Connecticut Office of Victim Services		\$1,910,570
Town of Ashford		\$1,000
Town of Coventry		\$500
Town of Ellington		\$2,200
Town of Groton		\$7,260
Town of Mansfield		\$6,500
TOTAL GOVERNMENT BASED GRANTS		\$2,800,002

Private Grants		
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Interest on Lawyer's Trust Account)		\$1,719,885
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Court Fees Grants-In-Aid)		\$5,117,584
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Judicial Branch Grants-In-Aid)		\$979,549
Connecticut Bar Foundation (RTC Eviction Defense)		\$1,271,843
Connecticut Bar Foundation (RTC Restraining Orders)		\$134,763
Community Foundation of Eastern CT		0
Community Foundation of Eastern CT - Women's & Girls Fund		\$8,600
Community Foundation of Fairfield County		\$37,510
Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation		0
The Tow Foundation, Inc.		0
United Way, Central and Northeastern Connecticut		\$11,000
United Way, Greater Waterbury		\$15,050
United Way, Southeastern Connecticut		\$18,000
TOTAL PRIVATE GRANTS		\$9,313,784

Donations and Other Income		
Program Fees		\$73,816
Campaign for Justice		\$263,407
Donated Goods & Services		\$109,844
United Way Donor Designations		\$4,070
Investment Income		\$45,339
Other Income		\$7,027
TOTAL DONATIONS AND OTHER INCOME		\$503,503
TOTAL CLS INCOME		\$12,617,289

Statements of Financial Position

JUNE 30, 2023-JUNE 30, 2022

Assets	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2022
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents—Operating Funds	\$3,391,543	\$3,944,729
Cash in Escrow—Client Funds	\$79,150	\$500
Short Term Investments	\$1,976,026	\$1,997,151
Receivables		
Grants and Contracts Receivable	\$595,988	\$758,363
Promises to Give	\$1,935,478	\$1,834,357
Other Receivables	\$40,983	\$93,670
Prepaid Expenses	\$109,331	\$82,224
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$8,128,499	\$8,710,994
FIXED ASSETS		
Property, Equipment, and Software	\$1,392,392	\$1,393,558
Leasehold Improvements	\$287,322	\$311,118
Total Fixed Assets Before Depreciation	\$1,679,714	\$1,704,676
Less, Accumulated Depreciation	(\$1,082,707)	(\$1,048,196)
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	\$597,007	\$656,480
OTHER ASSETS		
Right of Use Assets	\$2,226,504	—
Security Deposits	\$51,075	\$51,075
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS	\$2,277,579	\$51,075
TOTAL ASSETS	\$11,003,085	\$9,418,549
Liabilities and Net Assets	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2022
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$458,051	\$424,467
Accrued Expenses	\$95,977	\$245,605
Refundable Advances	770,154	\$1,187,516
Accrued Annual Leave	\$465,068	\$442,632
Current portion of lease liabilities	\$367,449	—
Client Trust Deposits	\$79,145	\$500
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$2,235,844	\$2,300,720
Accrued pension liability	\$4,984,172	\$5,505,371
Long-term lease liabilities	\$2,030,245	—
TOTAL LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	\$7,014,417	\$5,505,371
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$9,250,261	\$7,806,091
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions		
Attributable to Operation	\$(500,840)	\$1,764,018
Attributable to Pension Liability	\$521,199	(\$2,169,298)
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$20,359	(\$405,280)
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$1,732,465	\$2,017,738
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$1,752,824	\$1,612,458
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$11,003,085	\$9,418,549

Campaign for Justice Contributors

JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

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\$50,000 and Up

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\$10,000–\$24,999

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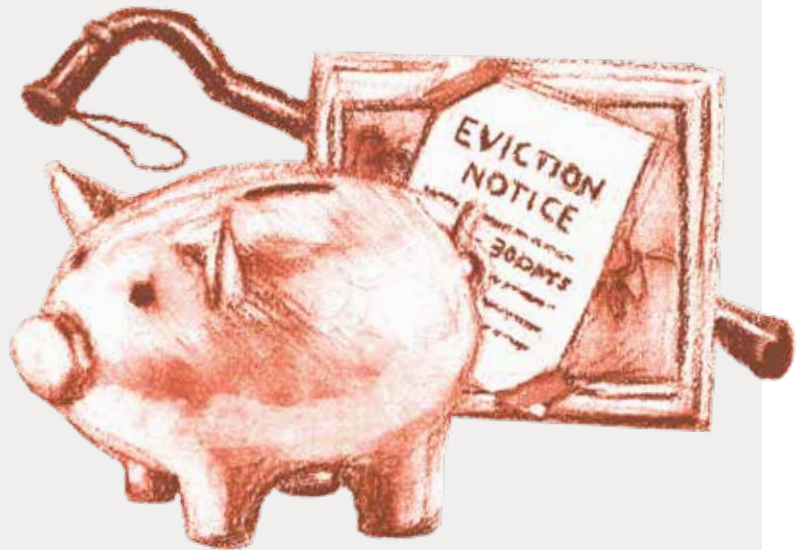
Up to \$199

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CASE STUDY

CLS Helps Elderly Man Stay In His Home

John is elderly and has suffered two strokes, significantly limiting his mobility. John's youngest daughter moved in with him and agreed to share the rent. John continued to pay his share but was not aware that his daughter failed to do the same, which he realized when the landlord started an eviction action. John's oldest daughter called Connecticut Legal Services for help. By the time John came to CLS, he owed more than he could afford to pay, his daughter had moved out, and he had nowhere else to go. CLS represented John in court, requesting that the eviction action be postponed as we helped John pursue rental assistance. The court granted the postponement until the rental assistance application process concluded. CLS then helped John fill out the application successfully, which helped him both pay what was owed and receive additional rental assistance so that he could become financially stable. The landlord was paid in full, and upon receiving payment, agreed to withdraw the eviction action. John now is safe from the eviction and the threat of homelessness.



Campaign for Justice Contributors

JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

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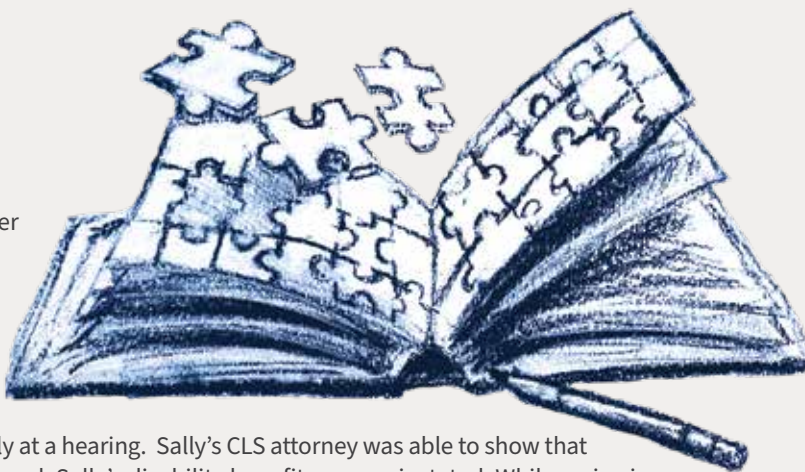
▶ CASE STUDY

CLS Helps Child Meet Her Medical Needs

Sally is a nine year old girl with autism who has lived her life with significant speech and language delays. Since the age of three, Sally had received disability benefits.

When Sally was later diagnosed with autism, her benefits were terminated. Sally's grandmother, her guardian, came to Connecticut Legal Services for help. After evaluating the case, Sally's CLS attorney

appealed the termination decision and represented Sally at a hearing. Sally's CLS attorney was able to show that Sally was still eligible for the benefits and the judge agreed. Sally's disability benefits were reinstated. While reviewing and preparing for Sally's case, the CLS attorney gathered the relevant materials and noticed deficits in the special education benefits Sally was receiving. During COVID, the school had terminated Sally's participation in special education, which she clearly needed to help her succeed in school. Sally's CLS attorney requested a meeting and obtained new evaluations of Sally's educational needs. The evaluation comprehensively showed that Sally qualified for and needed special education services. Sally's CLS attorney was able to secure all of the necessary accommodations and modifications, including two years of compensatory education in the form of tutoring in academics and writing, which is where Sally struggles most. CLS also facilitated Sally's reintroduction to her original therapist at the school-based health center and had the current school arrange Zoom sessions. Sally now has the disability benefits to meet her medical needs. She is doing very well in school now that she is receiving the appropriate education and therapy.



In memory of:

Roy F. Brown
Gladys Davis
Anthony M. DeVito Jr.
Thomas J. Flanagan
Harold J. Geragosian
Attorney Leo Gold
The Honorable Robert A. Martin
Dick McCarthy
Claudine Siegel
Lea Snedd
Judge Thomas J. O'Sullivan
James A. Wade, Esq.
Paul L. Witkin
Rev. Henry K. Yordon

In honor/appreciation of

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The Clinical Legal Education Movement
Kevin Brophy
Cohen and Wolf Clients
Ralph Davis
Evelyn and Marvin Farbman
Hunter Murdock
Nadine Nevins, Esq.
Deborah Witkin

In-kind gifts and services

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Julie Jaquays
Jason Kushner
Kate McEvoy
Anna Mikhaylina
Amy Orlando
The Panther Group
Kelsy Scarlett
Cindy Slane
Joseph Williams
Willimantic Fire Marshall

➤ CASE STUDY

CLS Helps Abused Woman Get Her Life Back

Mary cannot work because she suffers from a number of impairments, including PTSD (due to a history of sexual and physical trauma), schizophrenia, personality disorder, and depression. Mary began experiencing a mood disorder as a young teenager, and has had multiple breakdowns and dissociative events ever since. Abuse at the hands of both a stepfather and a boyfriend complicated her circumstances. Mary tried to work and to raise her daughter; however, her impairments prevented her from doing either properly. She spent over three months involuntarily committed to a psychiatric ward, and then became homeless after discharge. Through some access to community resources and treatment, she was able to get back on her feet enough to find an apartment that would take her housing voucher. However, she still felt isolated because of an inability to relate to people and lived in a town where she didn't know anyone. CLS represented Mary at her social security hearing and established her disability, which dated back to before the age of 22. This was a difficult task, but with determination, CLS was able to locate old medical records verifying her disability. This is important because it established her as a disabled adult that could claim her parents' higher benefits earnings. By winning this hearing, Mary was granted greater monthly benefits and a lump sum award that allowed her to find an apartment closer to her support system, and to get the services she needed to improve her parenting skills and live without the threat of homelessness.





Advancing Justice

62 Washington Street, 4th Floor
Middletown, Connecticut 06457

povertylaw@ctlegal.org

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bridgeport@ctlegal.org

16 Main Street
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860-225-8678; 1-800-233-7619
(serving the New Britain and Meriden areas,
as well as Middlesex County)
newbritain@ctlegal.org

125 Eugene O'Neil Drive
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