



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.
- **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 Disabled Man Retain Medical Care

Steve lives with debilitating medical conditions that leave him in constant pain and unable to work. For years, his disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) were his only source of income and allowed him to access the medical care so critical to his daily needs.

During a routine review of his eligibility, despite the fact that his health had not improved, the SSA determined that Steve had not proven that he was still disabled. Steve was stunned. Abruptly, his benefits — including Medicare — were terminated. Without his benefits, he had no way to pay for basic living expenses or the medical supplies he desperately needed.

When Steve turned to Connecticut Legal Services for help he had already gone months without benefits or health coverage. He was on the cusp of homelessness. CLS quickly gathered extensive medical records from his providers and submitted them to the SSA, urging the agency to reinstate his benefits. The SSA required their own evaluator, who then required an additional consultative examiner, all of which caused further delays. Steve's CLS attorney continued to propel the process forward. Finally, after reviewing the comprehensive medical packet CLS prepared, the SSA agreed that Steve continued to meet the disability criteria. They restored his benefits and awarded him the retroactive payments he had been denied during the appeals process.

The process took nearly a year — but with CLS's help, Steve once again has the income, Medicare coverage, and medical support he needs to live safely and with dignity.

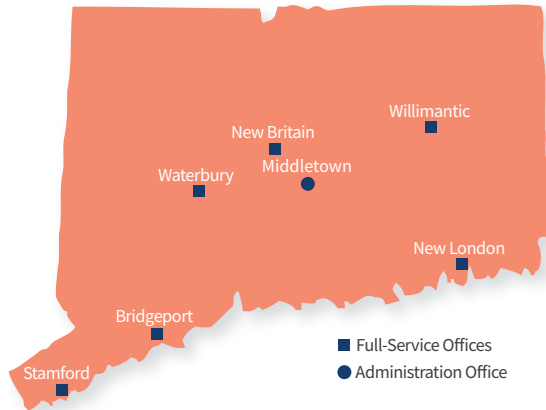




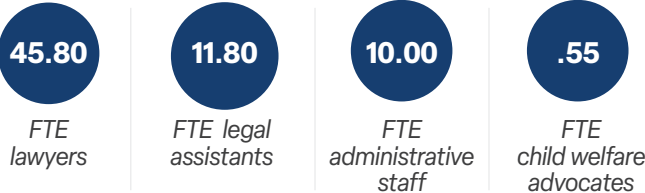
SERVICE AREA, OFFICES, AND STAFF

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 and one administrative office.



On June 30, 2025, the CLS staff consisted of



Distribution of Cases

In 2024–2025, Connecticut Legal Services received approximately 15,700 requests for service. We responded by opening 2,604 new cases for legal representation and counseling. We also worked on 1,406 cases opened in previous years. CLS services in these 4,010 cases benefited approximately 9,772 household members, which includes 4,000 children.

DISTRIBUTION OF 4,010 CASES HANDLED IN FISCAL YEAR 2024–2025

Housing and homelessness	39%
Domestic violence, divorce, child support, and other family matters	32%
Education and juvenile law	11%
Immigration	5%
Health law (including Medicaid, Medicare, and nursing home matters)	4%
Consumer (mostly for elderly)	3%
Social Security	3%
Public benefits and employment	1%
Intellectual Disabilities	1%
Other cases	1%

In addition to working on individual cases, CLS conducted 60 community legal education events attended by 3,400 people.

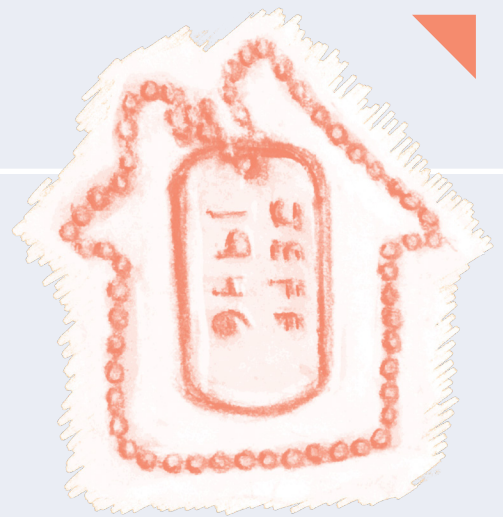
Case Study

CLS Helps Elderly Veteran Stay In Care

Jeff, a 79-year-old veteran living in a residential care home, was referred to Connecticut Legal Services by the regional long-term care ombudsman. At the facility, Jeff had been given notice of involuntary discharge after staff had accused Jeff of being threatening, leaving him at risk of homelessness.

When CLS met Jeff, it quickly became clear that the situation was far more complicated. The facility had not created a required person-centered service plan — a tool that helps staff understand a resident’s needs, conditions, and how best to communicate with them. As a result, staff was unaware of Jeff’s mental health conditions and did not know how to communicate in a way Jeff understood. Things escalated, and during one incident, Jeff was chased down a hallway after a disagreement. When Jeff reported it, the facility began discharge proceedings against him. CLS stepped in immediately, filed an appearance on Jeff’s behalf, and requested the facility’s staff-training records to determine whether employees had received their mandatory annual training regarding patient-specific care. Shortly afterwards, the facility withdrew the discharge notice.

CLS then helped Jeff file a grievance with the facility to obtain the person-centered service plan he should have had all along. As part of the grievance resolution, the facility adopted revisions to their grievance procedure, committed to retrain staff, and arranged to have the regional long-term care ombudsman conduct staff and resident trainings on a regular basis. Because of CLS’s assistance, Jeff was able to stay in the care home, the staff was better equipped to help him and other residents with specific needs, and Jeff was no longer at risk of homelessness.





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Astrid Lebron, Director of Operations

Nilda R. Havrilla, Litigation and Advocacy Director

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LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends,

Your support of Connecticut Legal Services transforms lives every day, and we are deeply grateful. For so many of our clients, life is shaped by long-term crises — poverty, disability, illness, domestic violence, language barriers, or discrimination — all while they continue caring for their children, elders, and communities. Even routine tasks can feel overwhelming.

And too often, just as they are working to stay afloat, a new crisis strikes: eviction papers arrive, wages go unpaid, utilities are shut off, a child loses critical services, or a survivor needs immediate protection. In these moments, a lawyer can be life-changing — and that is when CLS steps in.

Your generosity makes these interventions possible — especially in a year when funding remains unpredictable and the demand for our services continues to rise. Support from friends like you ensures that families are not turned away in their moments of greatest need. Throughout this year's report, you will see the powerful impact of our partnership. Because of you and supporters like you, young people like Billy can find permanent families; elders like Jeff can receive care with dignity and understanding; survivors like Gina and her daughter can live safely; and people like Steve, who live with disabilities, can have confidence that the benefits they rely on will be protected.

Together, we open the doors to justice. Together, we help families move from crisis to stability and from fear to hope. Together, we strengthen our communities and create opportunities for lasting change.

Thank you for making these transformations possible — especially when your support matters most.

With gratitude,



Deborah Witkin

DEBORAH R. WITKIN
Executive Director



Helen Harris

HELEN HARRIS
Board Chair

Financial Support 2024-2025

Government- Based Grants	Support
Agency on Aging, Senior Resources (Eastern Connecticut)	\$43,996
Agency on Aging, Southwestern Connecticut Area	\$32,780
Agency on Aging, Western Connecticut Area	\$40,000
City of Middletown	\$10,000
State of Connecticut Department of Social Services	\$596,712
State of Connecticut Judicial Branch	\$26,191
State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services	\$101,771
State of Connecticut Office of the Chief Public Defender	\$83,550
State of Connecticut Office of Victim Services	\$1,826,973
Town of Ashford	\$1,000
Town of Groton	\$7,260
Town of Mansfield	\$6,500
TOTAL GOVERNMENT BASED GRANTS	\$2,776,733

Private Grants	Support
Community Foundation of Fairfield County	\$62,510
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Interest on Lawyer's Trust Account)	\$3,491,958
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Court Fees Grants-In-Aid)	\$6,114,998
Connecticut Bar Foundation (Judicial Branch Grants-In-Aid)	\$883,383
Connecticut Bar Foundation (RTC Eviction Defense)	\$997,306
Connecticut Bar Foundation (RTC Restraining Orders)	\$411,322
Connecticut Health Foundation	\$50,000
Hartford Healthcare Medical Legal Partnership	\$191,791
Immigrant Justice Corp.	\$67,982
Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation	\$50,000
Public Utility Regulatory Authority Utility Settlement	\$2,123
Seedlings Foundation	\$15,125
United Way, Greater Waterbury	\$15,000
United Way, Southeastern Connecticut	\$24,903
TOTAL PRIVATE GRANTS	\$12,378,401

Donations and Other Income	
Campaign for Justice	\$261,805
Donated Goods & Services	\$166,450
Investment Income	\$99,956
Program Fees	\$46,979
United Way Donor Designations	\$3,527
Other Income	\$16,547
TOTAL DONATIONS AND OTHER INCOME	\$595,264
TOTAL CLS INCOME	\$15,750,398

Statements of Financial Position

Assets	June 30, 2025	June 30, 2024
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents—Operating Funds	\$2,281,967	\$2,706,069
Cash in Escrow—Client Funds	\$15,601	\$1,183
Short Term Investments	\$2,201,938	\$2,081,077
Receivables		
Grants and Contracts Receivable	\$577,595	\$669,818
Promises to Give	\$3,683,578	\$3,388,365
Other Receivables	\$15,448	\$51,836
Prepaid Expenses	\$106,476	\$93,461
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$8,882,603	\$8,991,809
FIXED ASSETS		
Property, Equipment, and Software	\$1,738,104	\$1,399,064
Leasehold Improvements	\$287,322	\$287,322
Total Fixed Assets Before Depreciation	\$2,025,426	\$1,686,386
Less, Accumulated Depreciation	\$(1,190,692)	\$(1,133,376)
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	\$834,734	\$553,010
OTHER ASSETS		
Right of Use Assets	\$2,049,977	\$1,872,631
Security Deposits	\$51,075	\$51,075
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS	\$2,101,052	\$1,923,706
TOTAL ASSETS	\$11,818,389	\$11,468,525
Liabilities and Net Assets	June 30, 2025	June 30, 2024
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$361,278	\$421,614
Accrued Expenses	\$96,095	\$55,074
Refundable Advances	\$482,516	\$1,091,696
Accrued Annual Leave	\$478,875	\$465,852
Current portion of lease liabilities	\$425,661	\$396,934
Client Trust Deposits	\$15,400	\$1,183
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$1,859,825	\$2,432,353
Accrued pension liability	\$3,608,144	\$4,286,366
Long-term lease liabilities	\$1,746,956	\$1,633,311
TOTAL LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	\$5,355,100	\$5,919,677
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$7,214,925	\$8,352,030
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions		
Attributable to Operation	\$552,801	\$(535,245)
Attributable to Pension Liability	\$678,222	\$697,806
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$1,231,023	\$162,561
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$3,372,441	\$2,953,934
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$4,603,464	\$3,116,495
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$11,818,389	\$11,468,525

Campaign for Justice Contributors

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

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\$10,000-\$24,999

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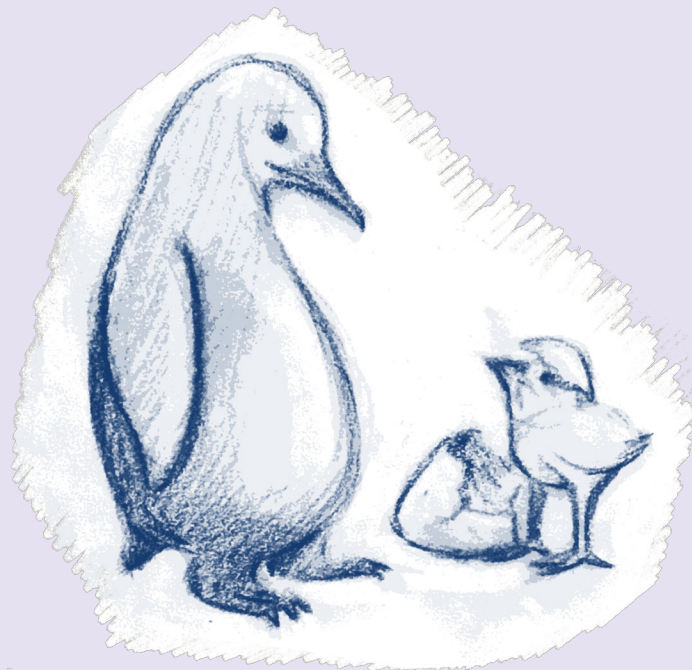
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Case Study

CLS Helps A Woman Protect Her Child

When Gina experienced a violent assault by her daughter's father while she was holding her daughter, her first concern was keeping her child safe. In the days that followed, a local domestic violence shelter referred Gina to Connecticut Legal Services. Gina's CLS attorney helped her obtain a temporary restraining order that prohibited Gina's former partner from having any contact with Gina or her daughter, temporarily ensuring their safety. When her former partner failed to appear at the hearing to extend the order, the judge reviewed the evidence — including confirmation that the former partner had been properly served by a state marshal — and found Gina's account credible. The restraining order was extended for one year, providing Gina with sole custody, allowing the former partner supervised visitation only at a facility where staff are trained to work with families in similar circumstances.

After being informed of his limited access to their child, Gina's former partner hired an attorney and filed a custody petition, seeking his own order of sole legal and physical custody of their daughter. At the hearing on the petition, Gina's ex-partner claimed that he had never been served with the temporary restraining order, therefore, the order should be vacated and he should be awarded custody. Gina's CLS attorney presented clear evidence that service had been done correctly. After a full hearing, the judge ruled in Gina's favor and issued a custody judgment that mirrored the protections of the restraining order — safeguarding Gina and her daughter as they move forward and begin to rebuild their lives.



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July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

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Case Study

CLS Helps Child Get Adopted Before Time Runs Out

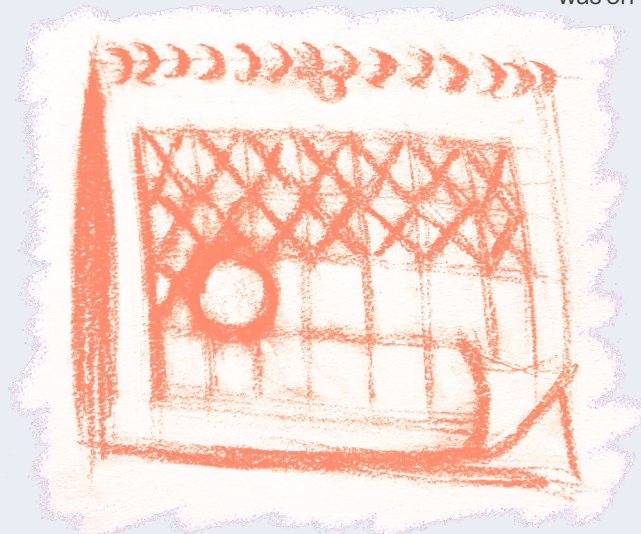
Billy was referred to Connecticut Legal Services when his abusive parents' parental rights were terminated and he and his half siblings were placed in foster care. Billy was much older than his siblings and his foster parents declined to adopt him, although they were adopting his half siblings. Billy's only existing relative was his aunt, who seemed more interested in the financial benefit she would gain from helping him than in actually caring for him. Yet, Billy hoped that one day they could be a family. Billy struggled in school, in large part because he was bounced from foster home to foster home. His sole focus

was on trying to find a job at 18 so that he would have a path forward, although he really wanted to go to culinary school.

When Billy's CLS advocates secured a foster placement for him, he had a hard time opening up to the family.

They—parents and two younger children—welcomed Billy with patience and kindness, doing everything they could to help him feel at home. Over time, they grew to love Billy and hoped to adopt him. Billy hesitated at first, worried about how the decision might affect his aunt. By the time he felt ready to move forward, he was less than nine months away from turning 18 and the clock was ticking.

With CLS's support guiding the process, the adoption was finalized just five months before his eighteenth birthday. Today, Billy has a permanent family, a renewed sense of belonging, a stable homelife, and plans to begin culinary school.



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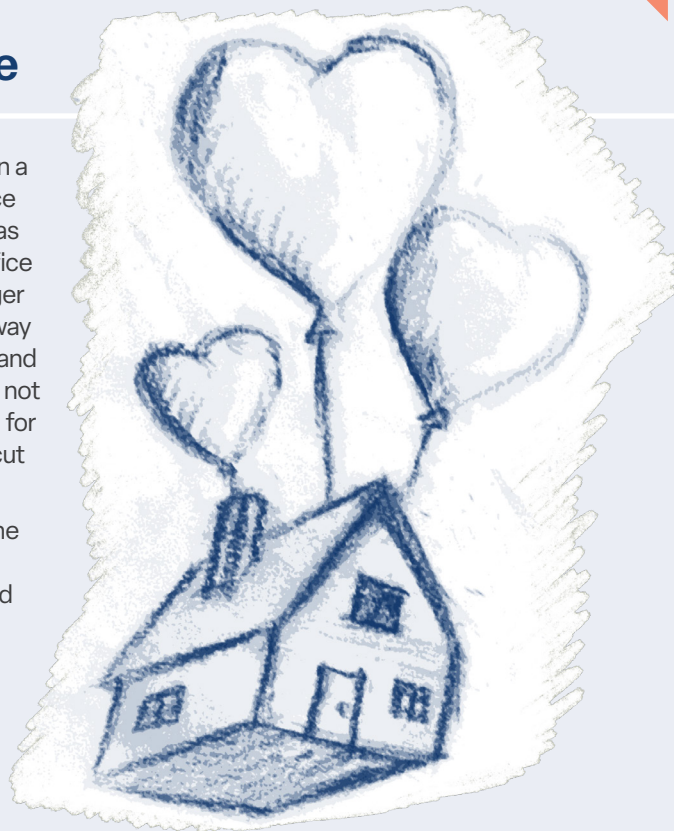
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Case Study

CLS Helps Elderly Man Go Home

Peter was 70 years old, physically disabled, and recuperating in a rehabilitation facility following surgery, when he received notice that he was being evicted for nonpayment of rent. While he was in the facility, he was not able to physically get to the rental office to pay his rent. Peter had tried contacting the property manager several times to either set up a direct deposit or find another way for him to make his rent payment. Peter was told not to worry and that he could pay when he got home from the facility. That did not prove to be true, as the landlord began an eviction against him for nonpayment of rent. At that point, Peter contacted Connecticut Legal Services.

CLS filed an appearance in the eviction case, and contacted the landlord's attorney. The landlord's attorney stated that Peter's subsidy was in danger because of the nonpayment and a missed recertification. CLS secured a delay in the eviction process, visited Peter in the rehabilitation facility, obtained a check for the back rent, and delivered it to the property manager. CLS also helped Peter collect and present the documents needed for his recertification. The landlord's lawyer agreed to withdraw the eviction action. As a result, Peter was able to retain his housing, return home after his physical rehabilitation, and maintain his subsidy.





Connecticut Legal Services

Advancing Justice

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