



# 2024 Annual Report

LEGAL  
AID ®  
SERVICE OF BROWARD COUNTY



Dear Friends:

This year was exciting and challenging at the same time. It was exciting because I was appointed Executive Director in May, 2024 and had a vision of all of the things I needed and wanted to accomplish. These accomplishments came with challenges.

The employment market was unforgiving, and it was difficult to hire and retain staff. But, with funding from Funding Florida Legal Aid, we were able to give our staff raises and raise our salary scale to attract new hires.

Despite the challenges presented, over 10,000 individuals and families still received the benefit of our legal services.

We increased the number of Board of Directors and expanded the criteria for board membership. We established a collaborative relationship with our Board and welcomed their input. Together, we made decisions that were in the best interests of Legal Aid.

We expanded our reach to clients through on-line access to information and intake documents, which made it easier and quicker for applicants to obtain service.

In order to educate or remind individuals and all of the Broward County non-profits and organization of the services we provide, we attended and made presentations and increased our social media presence by posting and promoting events, education, fundraising and resources.

We instituted a new pro bono program to complement the historical pro bono services that have been provided by Broward Lawyers Care.

We engaged in efforts to defeat a children's bill that would have affected our court appointments for children and in efforts to secure long-term stable funding for our program.

Great strides were made towards raising private, unrestricted, funding. However, we have much to do in the coming year to raise enough funds to be able to give access to all who need our legal assistance.

All in all, it was a good year. Thank you to our staff, board members, pro bono attorneys, law firms, and sponsors who assisted us in expanding access to justice for clients of Legal Aid Service of Broward County.

**Debra Koprowski, Esq.**

Executive Director

Legal Aid Service of Broward County

# Mission Statement

**Legal Aid Service of Broward County, Inc. (LAS) and Legal Aid Service of Collier County, a division of LAS**, provide free civil legal services to low-income and otherwise eligible residents of Broward and Collier Counties. Our mission is to provide high quality free civil legal advice, representation, and education to the disadvantaged of Broward and Collier Counties, so as to improve the lifestyle and living conditions in low-income communities and encourage self-sufficiency.

## Our Values

**Values**—We value access to justice for all and strive to provide excellent and timely legal services with an unwavering focus on:

- **Fairness:** Our most vulnerable citizens need real and meaningful access to civil courts when facing the most serious possible losses or consequences involving basic human needs, regardless of their ability to pay for legal counsel.
- **Justice:** The legal rights of our clients in need continue to be jeopardized in our local civil courts for those without counsel in high-stakes matters involving safety, health, or minimum economic security. Equal justice demands safeguards and protection for all in these matters.
- **Empowerment:** Striving to empower individuals to improve their situations by providing high-quality and impactful legal services.
- **Excellence:** Committing to high standards in service delivery and organizational practices, with honesty, transparency, and confidentiality.
- **Community:** Embracing and engaging with the community to foster collaboration and support.



# OUR IMPACT BROWARD COUNTY



**1,497**

Children benefited from our children's advocacy programs during 2024



**22,000+**

Low-income clients have received Pro Bono legal assistance since the inception of Broward's Pro Bono Program in 1983



**877**

Veterans and their families received legal assistance in 2024



**7,753**

Underserved individual and families in Broward received legal assistance in 2024



**3,069**

Legal Aid attorneys served 3,069 clients seeking housing and consumer assistance in 2024



**13,880**

Individuals impacted by Legal Aid services during 2024

# OUR IMPACT COLLIER COUNTY



**889**

Children benefited from our children's advocacy programs during 2024



**2,000+**

Low-income clients have received Pro Bono legal assistance since the inception of Collier's Pro Bono Program in 2004



**46**

Veterans and their families received legal assistance in 2024



**2,176**

Underserved individual and families in Collier received legal assistance in 2024



**609**

Legal Aid attorneys served 609 clients seeking housing and consumer assistance in 2024



**4,031**

Individuals impacted by Legal Aid services during 2024

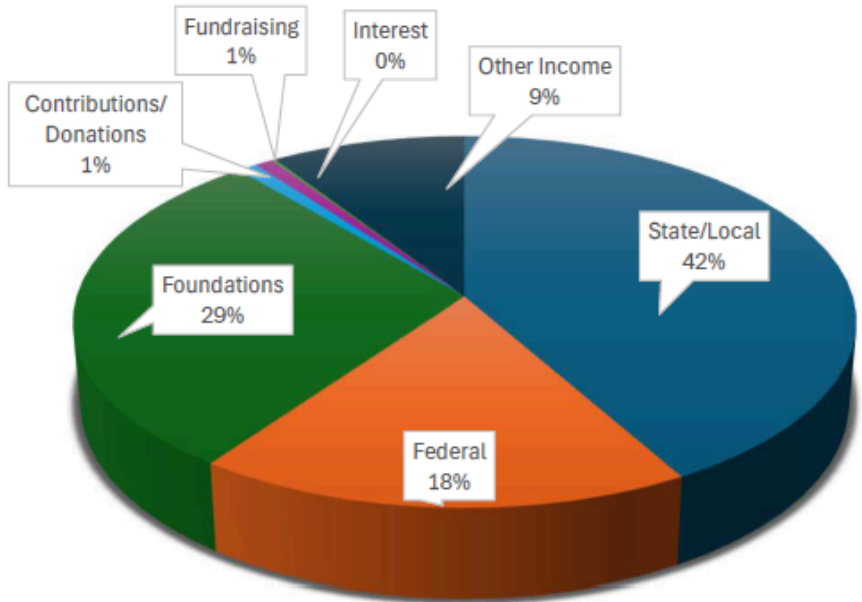
# TOTAL DOLLAR VALUE OF ECONOMIC BENEFITS

**\$2,394,422**



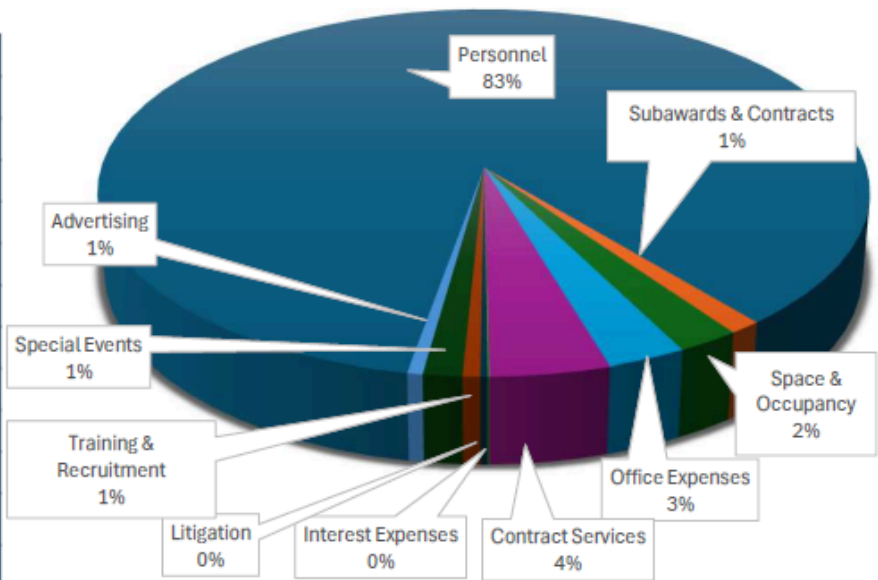
## Revenue

Source	Revenue
State/Local	\$ 5,226,809
Federal	\$ 2,259,627
Foundations	\$ 3,622,805
Contributions/Donations	\$ 115,207
Fundraising	\$ 108,655
Interest	\$ 17,815
Other Income	\$ 1,151,797
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,502,715</b>



## Expense

Source	Expense
Personnel	\$ 10,581,449
Subawards & Contracts	\$ 145,401
Space & Occupancy	\$ 282,177
Office Expenses	\$ 358,317
Contract Services	\$ 541,803
Interest Expenses	\$ 7,041
Litigation	\$ 33,397
Training & Recruitment	\$ 78,534
Special Events	\$ 176,491
Advertising	\$ 69,217
Other Operating Expenses	\$ 100,806
Insurance	\$ 118,688
Depreciation	\$ 151,761
Equipment Rental & Maintenance	\$ 67,225
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,712,307</b>



# OUR 2024 GRANTORS

## BROWARD COUNTY



<b>Grantors</b>
<b>Broward County</b>
<b>Broward Partnership for the Homeless Inc. (BPHI)</b>
<b>Childnet, Inc.</b>
<b>Children's Service Council of Broward County</b>
<b>City of Fort Lauderdale</b>
<b>Funding Florida Legal Aid f/k/a The Florida Bar Foundation, Inc.</b>
<b>Health Foundation of South Florida, Inc.</b>
<b>Internal Revenue Service</b>
<b>Legal Services Corporation (subgrant through Coast to Coast Legal Aid of South Florida)</b>
<b>Manne Foundation Legal Services Corp. d/b/a Manne Foundation Homeless Prevention Program</b>
<b>State of Florida Attorney General's Office (VOCA)</b>
<b>The Advocate Program, Inc.</b>
<b>U.S. Dept. of Housing &amp; Urban Development (subgrant through Jacksonville Area Legal Aid)</b>
<b>United Way of Broward County</b>

# OUR 2024 GRANTORS

## COLLIER COUNTY



### Grantors

**Area Agency on Aging - Southwest Florida**

**American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)**

**Collier County**

**Collier Community Foundation**

**Pat and Tom Grossman Charitable Fund**

**The American National Red Cross**

**Internal Revenue Service**

**Naples Children and Education Foundation (now Naples Children Foundation)**

**Order of the Sacred Heart of Mary**

**Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation**

**State of Florida Attorney General's Office (VOCA)**

**United Way of Collier County and the Keys**

**Women's Giving Circle of Southwest Florida**

## Championing Homeless Prevention

### A Visionary Approach to a Pressing Crisis

In Broward County, the specter of homelessness looms large. The Broward County 2022 Task Force Point in Time Survey reported 2054 individuals facing the uncertainty of shelter each night; but it is noted that countless homeless individuals are not accounted for during the survey. Amidst this crisis, the MANNE HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM, inspired by Bob and Grace Manne stands as a beacon of hope and innovation. Unlike traditional efforts that address homelessness after it occurs, our program focuses on prevention—stopping homelessness before it starts. Although it focuses on families, especially those who are facing homelessness for the first time, this proactive approach not only saves individuals and families from the trauma of displacement but also mitigates societal costs significantly.

### The Manne's Vision

Bob and Grace Manne's passion for homeless prevention and this innovative model serve as the foundation of this Program. To that end, Bob and Grace have committed One Million Dollars. Understanding that many individuals and families are only temporarily unable to afford housing due to unforeseen circumstances like health issues, caregiving responsibilities, or temporary employment disruptions, the Mannes envisioned a strategy that combines rapid-response legal assistance, financial resources, and a compassionate approach to help prevent countless evictions that could result in homelessness. This efficient and compassionate approach has shown great success preventing countless evictions and instances of homelessness in collaboration with Legal Aid Service of Broward County (LASBC).

### The Project in Action

#### The MANNE HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

Leverages a unique blend of legal expertise and available public and private funding for rental assistance to provide rapid and efficient support to those at risk. Our multifaceted services refer clients to other units within Legal Aid for other legal needs allowing those in jeopardy to remain in their home.



[ManneHomelessPrevention.org](http://ManneHomelessPrevention.org)



Stock photo – does not depict actual client

### Impact and Success

The MANNE HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM has made significant strides.

**843**

Individuals Served and Rescued from Imminent Homelessness: Including 343 adults and 465 children, high-lighting the project's reach.

**\$1M**  
A One  
Million Dollar  
Commitment.

**\$724,411**

in Rental Assistance Monies, at an average \$1,109.69 per individual to prevent the individual from becoming homeless, as opposed to a cost of \$47,000 for the County to support one homeless individual for one year.



### Attorney advocating in Dependency for the children yielded life-changing outcomes

THE ATTORNEY OF CHILDREN OF A SIBLING GROUP IDENTIFIED PREVIOUSLY UNDETECTED SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITIONS THREATENING THE EYESIGHT OF THE CHILDREN AND SECURED APPROPRIATE CARE

The Attorney for the Children was appointed to all the children of a sibling group with a long history of being in care (removed and reunified and removed again). The Attorney for the Children independently reviewed the case and visited the children's schools.

Through the review and contact with teachers, the Attorney for the Children found that the oldest child, Danny\*, had severe vision issues. The Department and GAL were unaware of the severity of Danny's vision issue, and the issue was never addressed during the pendency of the prior nor current dependency cases. There were no school accommodations, nor did Danny receive any vision specialist care.

The lapse in vision care resulted in visual loss in one eye and severe vision impairment in Danny's other eye.

As an independent and direct advocate, Danny's Attorney met with the school administration to set up temporary support and followed up with the school administration regarding a 504 Plan. The school at that time did not have an appointed 504 specialist. The Attorney for the Children then requested a 504 Plan meeting and implementation of support services for Danny in school and follow-up vision specialist appointments. This was possible as Danny's Attorney was not limited to only narrow dependency matters. Additionally, a vision assessment for the younger children was secured at the request of the Attorney for the Children. It was discovered that the younger children may have vision issues. At the request of the Attorney for the Children, the court has ordered vision services for all the sibling group.

The potential for the tragic – and irreversible – loss of eyesight was remedied by the diligent and skilled advocacy of the Attorney for the Children. The involvement of the Attorney for the Children was made possible by the appointment by the Court to handle this unique role in the system. The checks and balances and having an Attorney advocating in Dependency for the children in this manner caught the otherwise undetected problem yielded life-changing outcomes for the children through supports and services available under 504 Plans.

*\*Name of the client has been changed. Images are not those of the client or her family.*



### ONE MOTHER, FOUR CHILDREN, AND A NEW LIFE FREE FROM ABUSE

After more than 16 months of intensive litigation, Legal Aid Service of Collier County (LASCC) successfully resolved a high-conflict divorce case involving Susan\*, a mother of four children whose marriage had been marked by her husband's recurring legal troubles, including multiple drug-related arrests and ultimately a violent domestic battery committed in front of their children. The husband had physically abused Susan throughout their marriage, with several incidents resulting in hospital visits. Throughout the lengthy divorce proceedings, the husband and his attorney aggressively fought to force the sale of the family home, which would have displaced Susan and her children during an already traumatic period.

Through persistent advocacy by LASCC's staff attorney, we achieved a settlement agreement on the day of trial that secured exclusive use and possession of the family home for Susan for over 10 years, until her youngest child reaches adulthood and completes high school. The husband will continue to pay the mortgage and additional expenses, while our client obtained 100% of the timesharing with the children, with the husband's visitations strictly limited to supervised daytime visits. This outcome represents far more than a legal victory—it represents LASCC's commitment to providing stability and safety for our community.

Cases like these truly showcase the essential nature of our work. Many of our cases take months or even years to resolve, but the stakes remain equally high from beginning to end. It is unlikely that our client could have obtained this result on her own, as the husband was represented by counsel who deliberately prolonged the process through delays and aggressive tactics. Through dedicated representation and persistence, Legal Aid ensures that vulnerable families like this one receive the protection and justice they deserve, regardless of their financial circumstances.

*\*Name of the client has been changed. Images are not those of the client or her family.*

Thank you to the **League of Justice** for their sustained annual commitment ensuring access to justice for those who need it most. Your generous contributions make our work with the Broward community possible.

## Legendary

\$10,000

Jacquelyn &  
Bruce Rogow



SETNOR BYER  
INSURANCE & RISK

Shutts

## Extraordinary

\$5,000+



# 2024 BOARD MEMBERS



## OFFICERS

**Chairperson - Chad Van Horn**

Van Horn Law Group, P.A.

**Vice Chairperson - Katie Kohn, Esq.**

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Attorney

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Daszkal Bolton

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Quarles

**Jesse Diner, Esq.**

Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC

**Barbara McCarthy, Esq.**

Attorney

**Patricia Preciado, Esq.**

Patricia Preciado Law LLC

**Douglas H. Reynolds, Esq.**

Tripp Scott

**Ofer Shmucher, Esq.**

Shmucher Law, P.L.

**Kimberly A. Spiker, Esq.**

Northern Trust

## Executive Leadership

**Debra Koprowski, Esq.** - Executive Director

**Carol O'Callaghan, Esq.** - Regional Deputy Executive Director

**Angela Palmer** - Chief Financial Officer

**Jeffrey Ahren** - Regional Director of Development

**Beatriz Arboleda** - Human Resources Manager

# SUPPORT OUR MISSION



Your support made every achievement in this report possible, but our work isn't done. There are many ways you can help our lawyers change lives for the better and make a profound positive impact to make our local community a better and more just place for all to live and thrive:

- [Make a financial donation](#)
- [Volunteer](#)
- [Provide pro bono legal assistance](#) (Florida licensed attorneys in good standing)
- [Join up to receive our newsletter](#) to stay current on our programs and impact
- Attend our annual special events
- Follow and like us on social media:



## CONTACT US

Contact us to learn more about our programs or to schedule a tour:

[www.BrowardLegalAid.org](http://www.BrowardLegalAid.org)  
[Development@legalaid.org](mailto:Development@legalaid.org)  
(954) 736-2470