

Annual Report 2021



COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES
of MID-FLORIDA

LETTER FROM THE CEO



I continue to remain both proud and humbled by the impact our dedicated lawyers, staff, and volunteers made in Central Florida during 2021. The year proved to be a test of endurance and Community Legal Services was up to the challenge. Despite the continued uncertainty, Community Legal Services excelled in every aspect of the organization, achieving, or surpassing pre-pandemic levels of operating efficiency. Modifying our approach to client services, we handled over 9,000 cases, which was our highest number in nearly a decade. Traffic on our web-based resources nearly tripled, and we were able to reduce operating and administrative costs by 25%. All this was accomplished while improving our organization's cybersecurity position and continuing to increase our relationships with community partners. We are proud to have been named #6 on *Non-Profit Times*' Best Non-Profits to Work For and recognized as one of the Best Places to Work by the *Orlando Business Journal*.

Our success, in part, is due to the tremendous support we received in 2021 from our community. In 2021, we saw record numbers of attorneys participating in legal advice clinics and a significant increase in collaborative projects with partners and businesses, all aimed to improve the communities where we live and work. We continue to build stronger relationships with our local and state officials as we work together to address the long-term impacts of the last 24 months.

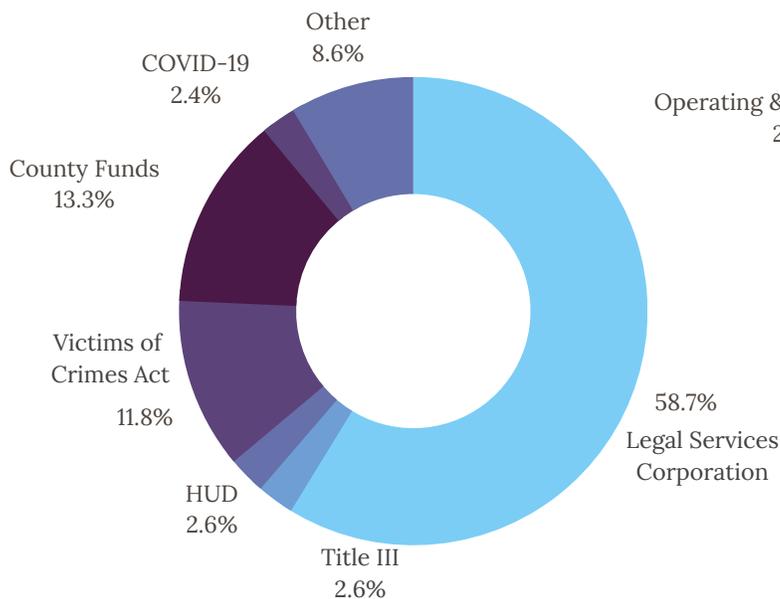
As you take some time to review our accomplishments from last year, please consider reaching out to volunteer, take a case, or make a contribution. The communities continue to need our help more than ever, and we certainly could use yours. Only together can we make sure there is "Legal Aid for All".

With Gratitude,

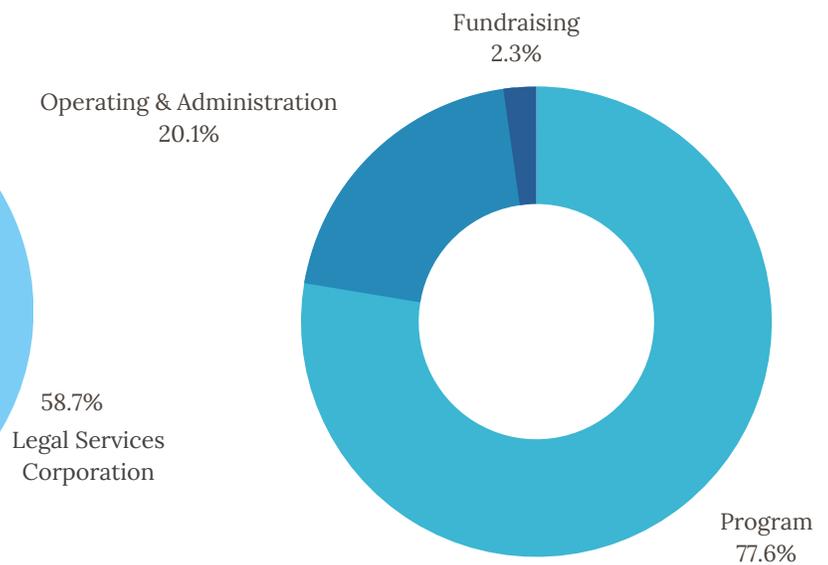
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey D. Harvey". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeffrey D. Harvey, Esq.

2021 REVENUE



2021 EXPENSES



SERVICES

Family Law

Domestic violence injunctions, divorce, paternity, custody, child support and visitation

Community Economic Development

Small business, non-profit work as well as assistance with deals for the development of affordable housing

Veterans

Veterans Administration (VA) disability claims, rating reductions, discharge upgrades and other civil legal matters

Public Benefits

Cash assistance, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security benefits, unemployment compensation, food stamps

Elder Law

Abuse issues, living wills, advanced healthcare directives, financial scams and exploitation

Housing

Landlord/tenant issues, investigation and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, mortgage foreclosure, housing and financial counseling

Consumer Law

Sales contracts, credit issues, repossession, harassment by creditors, bankruptcy, wage garnishment

Education

Suspensions, expulsions and rights of children and those with disabilities

Medical-Legal Partnerships

Embedding lawyers and paralegals alongside health care teams in clinics to work collaboratively to identify and treat health harming social conditions

ASSISTING THOSE IN NEED

- **12,971** Requests for assistance answered including phone calls, and online applicants
- **7,886** Cases Closed in 2021
- **3,964** Domestic Violence survivors helped
- **9,769** Children benefited from CLSMF cases
- **2,642** Lives of Seniors improved by CLSMF cases
- **814** Lives of Veterans improved by CLSMF staff
- **2,773** Cases involving someone with a disabling condition

\$26,500

**POVERTY LEVEL INCOME
OF A FAMILY OF 4**

\$1.1 M

RETURNED TO CLIENTS



584,626

Households with income at
200% Poverty or Less



78,925

Estimated Legal Matters for
Eligible Households

2021 COMMUNITY OUTREACH



We connected with **7,128** people at
over **200** community outreach events.

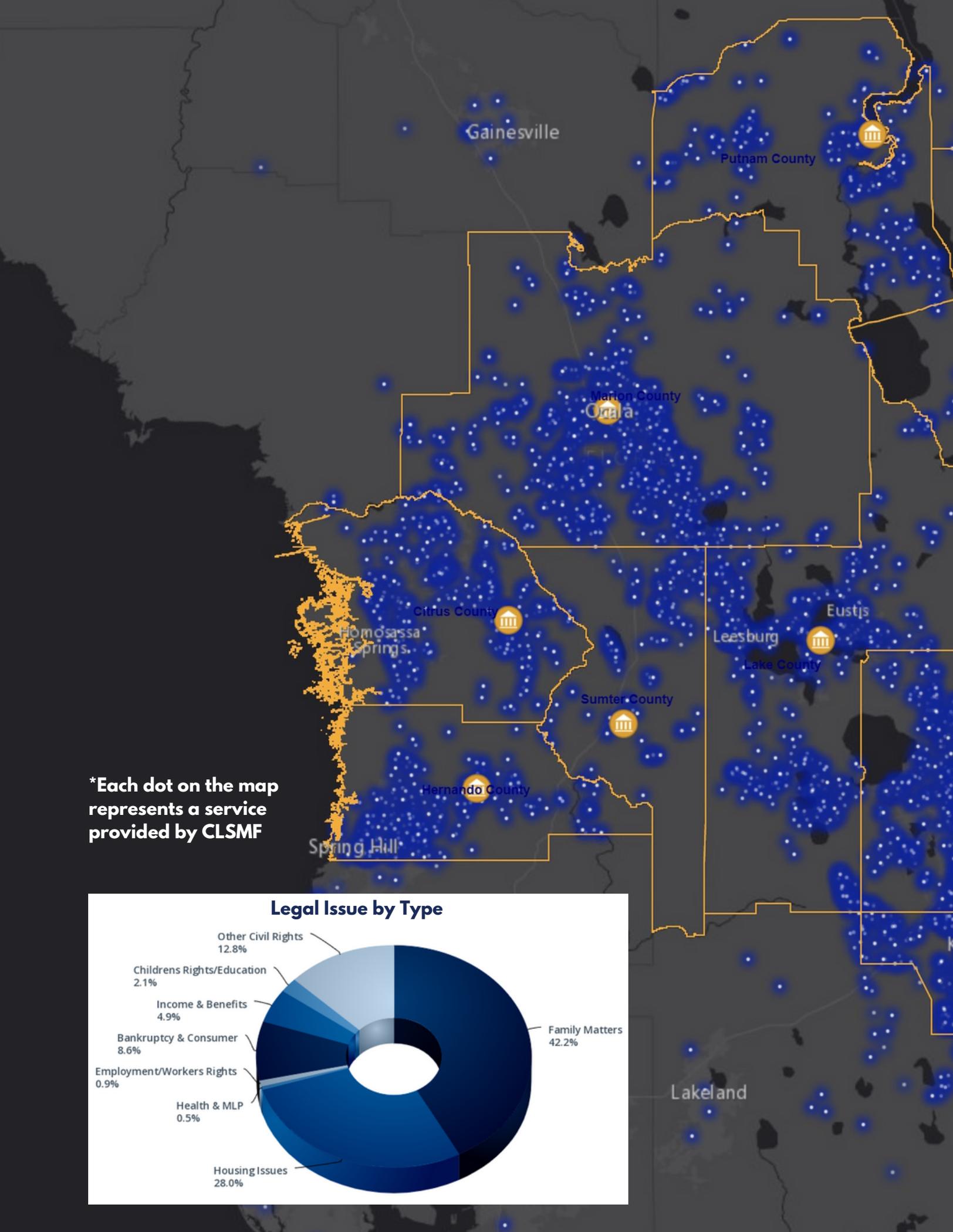
Pro Bono offered **81** Legal Clinics
where volunteers worked on **336** cases.



VOLUNTEER IMPACT

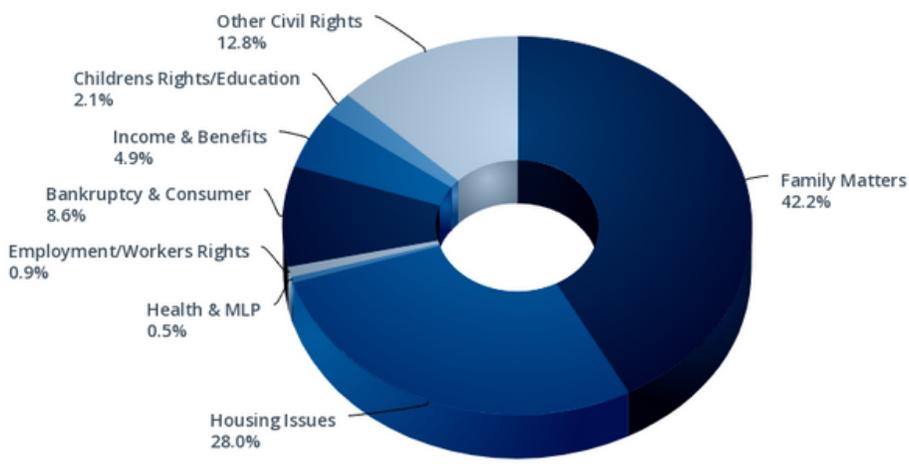
- **208** Attorneys volunteered in 2021
- **535** Pro Bono cases handled by volunteer attorneys
- **658** Clients served by Pro Bono attorneys
- **1,983** Service hours by Pro Bono attorneys

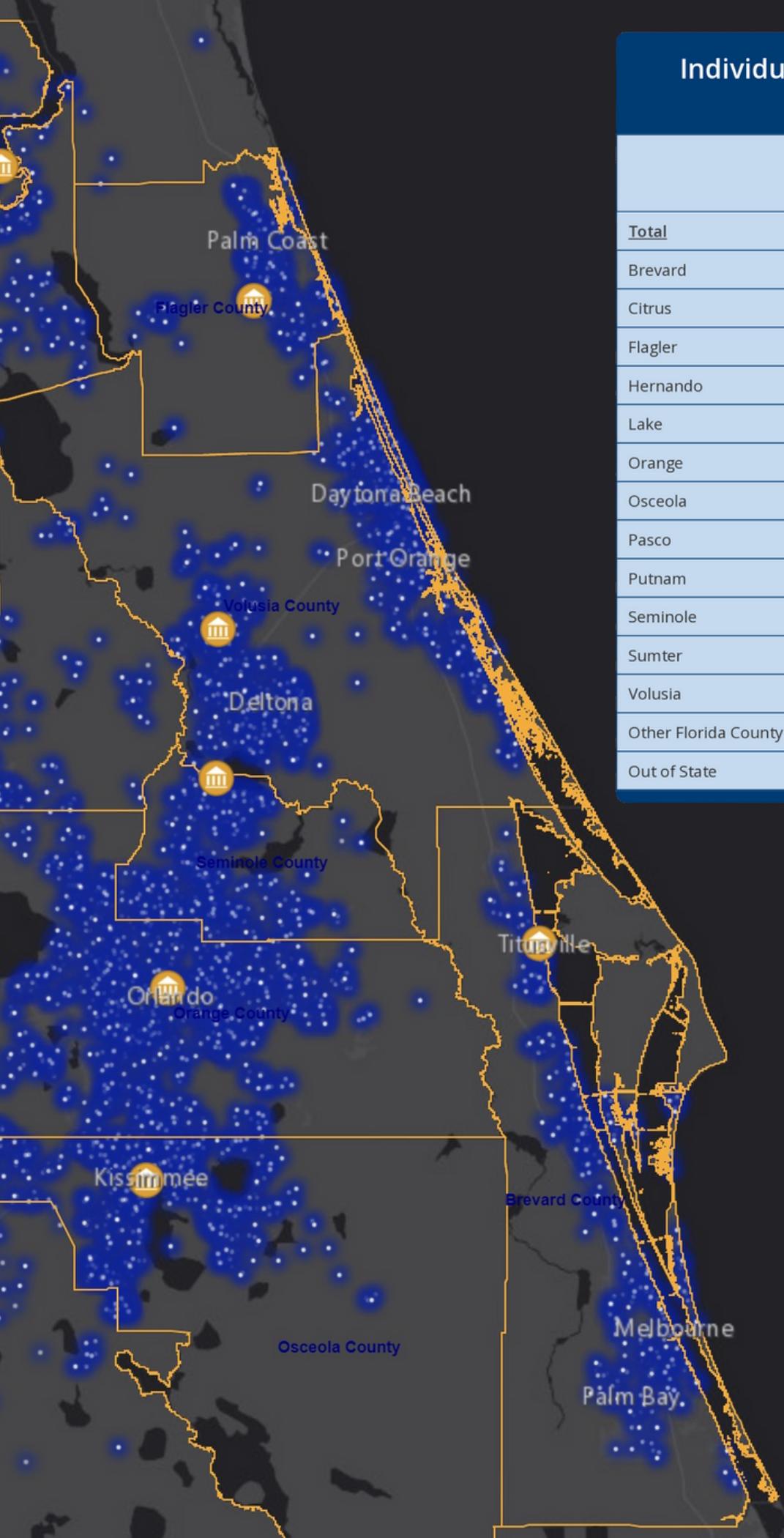




***Each dot on the map represents a service provided by CLSMF**

Legal Issue by Type





Individuals Assisted in 2021

by County

	Total	
	Children Impacted	Adults Impacted
Total	11,191	13,459
Brevard	565	591
Citrus	488	637
Flagler	330	430
Hernando	625	591
Lake	1,082	1,007
Orange	2,523	3,162
Osceola	1,371	1,572
Pasco	18	21
Putnam	335	395
Seminole	605	786
Sumter	236	220
Volusia	1,760	2,434
Other Florida County	1,160	1,480
Out of State	93	133

Atlantic
Ocean

RECORD BREAKING YEAR OF SERVICE



Staff spent **63,326** hours handling cases

23% 
increase

OVER 2020



We assisted with **10,067** legal matters



Staff devoted **67,464** hours to outreach and community work



39,019 total individuals called the HELpline

RECORD BREAKING DIGITAL IMPACT



Over **1.7 Million** video views on YouTube



Nearly **200,000** people reached



Engagement rate **4X higher** than standard



314,200 people viewed

373,700 pages of our Legal Self Help Library



Averaging **4.5** self-help pages per user

RECORD BREAKING YEAR OF NEWS COVERAGE

82%
increase

IN POTENTIAL NEWS
REACH OVER 2020

1.51 B

The potential number of unique people who saw the campaign's total number of published posts and stories.

53%
increase

IN MENTIONS OVER 2020

1.96 k

Number of Mentions Across Media Platforms



Getting Results Award Sponsorship

WKMG Impressions- 5,523,000

Digital Impressions- 3,938,683

COZI Impressions- 1,124,000

Clicks to Website- 4,853

CNN · CNN.com · Anna Bahney · USA · Aug 2, 2021 · 6:16 pm

What's next for struggling renters now that the eviction ban has expired

in Florida," said **Jeffrey Hussey**, director of public interest and litigation at **Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida**, an organization

Reach 138M · Social Echo ▾

Neutral

Yahoo! Finance · USA · Apr 6, 2021 · 8:00 am

Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida Inc. Named One of the Best Nonprofits to Work for in 2021.

, Fla., April 6, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- **Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida Inc. (CLSMF)**, a civil legal aid firm servicing 12 counties in

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NPR · National Public Radio · Chris Arnold · USA · Feb 12, 2021 · 5:01 am

Renters Are Getting Evicted Despite 'CDC Eviction Ban' — 'I'm Scared'

client for this matter, she is it," says **Breezi Hicks** of **Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida**. Hicks represents Amber and filed an



Reach 60M · Social Echo ▾

Neutral

Yahoo! news · Desiree Stennett · USA · May 20, 2021 · 10:00 am

Locked Out: As COVID worsens Florida eviction crisis, more Black renters' lives upended

you are currently facing eviction and live in Central Florida, contact **Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida** at 1-800-405-1417 to find out



Reach 65M · Social Echo ▾

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USA Today · Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy · Venugopal Ramaswamy · USA · Dec 9, 2021 · 12:01 am

Renters should prepare for disaster. Here's what to do after a storm, flood or wildfire.

is key, says **Jeffrey Hussey**, the director of Public Interest & Litigation at **Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida**, a nonprofit law firm.



Reach 54M · Social Echo ▾

Neutral

21 · 988

Yahoo! news · Kate Santich · USA · Aug 27, 2021 · 5:39 pm

Thousands in Central Florida at risk after Supreme Court halts eviction moratorium

[final stage]," said **Jeffrey Hussey**, director of public interest and litigation for **Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida**. "Those are just



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CLIENT STORIES

*Names were changed for confidentiality purposes.



Mary - Medical-Legal Partnership

*Mary and her husband were referred to us in 2021 for assistance with medical bills. Within a few months of working with our contact at the healthcare facility, we were able to secure over \$50,000 under the Financial Assistance Program to cover all their medical bills. This prevented their debt from being sent to collections and helped to maintain their credit rating.

Cleo - Fair Housing

*Cleo had severe medical issues and kept falling in her apartment. For her safety, she had to move to an assisted living facility. When she asked management to release her from her lease which expired well into 2022, the apartment complex wouldn't allow her to leave without financial penalty.

CLSMF sent an impassioned letter on her behalf to the apartment complex, and they relented. They terminated Cleo's lease without penalty.

Cleo moved to her assisted living facility with the peace of mind knowing she did not have a broken lease or eviction on her record.



CLIENT STORIES

Wonda - Helpline to Pro Bono

*Wonda contacted CLSMF in order to retrieve her \$2,800 stimulus check. Her husband passed away in early 2021 and the IRS sent the stimulus check to her husband's bank account. Although Wonda's name was on the check, the bank required her to get a court order before they would release the funds. Wonda sought our help. CLSMF secured an Order of Summary Administration for Wonda, and she was finally able to access her funds.



Elvin - Helpline

Elvin contacted CLSMF to request housing counseling assistance. His second mortgage was delinquent due to multiple hardships. He initially had a sale date scheduled for July 2020, but CLSMF contacted the lender and immediately started working with Elvin to complete and submit his request for mortgage assistance. During this time, Elvin received foreclosure advice and assistance from our Consumer Unit. We assisted Elvin in applying for homestead exemption. In March 2021, Elvin's home was scheduled for another sale date, but we were able to show evidence that he is currently under an agreement to repay his debt.

Elvin remains in his home and is working to pay off his debt. He feels he can start enjoying life and begin planning for the future.

GETTING RESULTS



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF JUSTICE

JUSTICE.GOV

Justice Department Settles With Florida's Volusia County School District To Protect Students With Disabilities From Classroom Removals And Other Discrimination

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department...

Katie Kelly, Ph.D., Esq., Supervising Attorney for the Children's Rights Unit at CLSMF, filed the original complaint against Volusia County School District in May 2017, alleging the district failed to accommodate students with disabilities and denied them access to equal educational opportunities.

Finding evidence of many cases to corroborate the original complaint, the DOJ's ruling was a success for countless current and future students.

CLSMF gets court to declare statute as unconstitutional for violating equal protection

The CLSMF family unit led by Serena Pines, Esq. recently challenged Fla. Stat. § 742.18 when her client, a woman, was prevented from disestablishing paternity based on the statute that only allowed for the father of the child and not for the mother to establish or disestablish paternity.



29 Fla. L. Weekly Supp. 320b

Online Reference: FLWSUPP 2905PERD

Child custody -- Disestablishment of paternity -- Mother seeking to disestablish paternity of legal father on ground that legal father's paternity was a material mistake of fact -- Section 742.18, which provides means by which men may disestablish paternity without proof of fraud, duress, or material mistake is not gender-neutral and violates equal protection -- There is no exceedingly persuasive justification that would serve important governmental objective to exclude women -- Mother's request to disestablish paternity of legal father is granted

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LSC | America's Partner for Equal Justice

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

LSC is the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans in the nation. Established in 1974, LSC operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that promotes equal access to justice and provides grants for high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans. LSC distributes more than 90 percent of its total funding to 132 independent nonprofit legal aid programs with more than 800 offices. LSC-funded programs help people who live in households with annual incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.



The Florida Bar Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide greater access to justice. Through strategic grant making, the Foundation funds local and statewide civil legal aid organizations and projects to improve the administration of justice and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the legal aid delivery system. The Foundation engages in catalytic philanthropy by investing in training, technology, technical assistance, assessment, and capacity-building for legal aid and works to develop and expand innovative pro bono initiatives.



Heart of Florida United Way

Heart of Florida United Way fights for the education, health, and financial stability of every person in Central Florida. Founded in 1939, Heart of Florida United Way is Central Florida's largest supporter of local health and human service agencies. In 2016-2017, it managed more than \$46 million dollars in total resources, including over \$17.7 million raised during the annual campaign that helps fund nearly 60 local health and human service programs.

PARTNERS

- Aging Network Agencies
- Aspire Health Partners
- Changing Homelessness for Volusia and Flagler counties
- Citrus County Senior Programs
- Community Action Agencies
- Community with a Heart
- Consumer Advocate Groups
- County Health Departments
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Elder Options and Elder Source
- Flagler County Senior Services Program
- Florida Legal Services
- Florida Civil Legal Aid Association
- Guardian Ad Litem Programs
- Health Care Center for the Homeless
- Homeless Services Network
- Homeless Shelters
- Housd, the Central Florida Regional Housing Trust
- Housing Authorities
- Immigrant Assistance Programs
- Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar
- Marion County Bar Association
- Marion County Children's Alliance
- Orange County Eviction Diversion Program
- Orlando City Mayor's Veterans Advisory Council
- Osceola Council on Aging
- Salvation Army
- Services for the Blind
- Transition House
- Volunteers of America (Brevard County)
- Volunteers of America (Marion County)
- United Way
- United Way Heart of Florida
- United Way Volusia Flagler
- Westbrook Services Corporation

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CORE VALUES

Our core values drive the decisions we make, how we work, and exemplify our staff, volunteers, and partnerships. Our mission requires us to be a **PILLAR** in the communities we serve.

Passionate - We eagerly fight for meaningful causes, no matter how challenging. Our enthusiasm for justice influences others to join in making change in our community through their service, practice, and charity.

Integrity - We are committed to honesty and professionalism in all our interactions. Trust is the foundation for the integral role we fill in our community's system of justice.

Leverage - As a team, we make a difference in people's lives. We bring all our resources to the table to ensure that our clients feel supported, empowered, and heard.

Leadership - We are leaders working to find ways to make our communities a better place to live. High standards are in our blood, and we pursue excellence in our practice and partnerships.

Adaptable - We seek opportunities to increase our impact. We listen to all ideas, embrace change, and seek continuous improvement in order to achieve better outcomes for our clients, organization and our community.

Respect - We treat everyone with professionalism, dignity, and respect. We keep our promises, embrace diversity, communicate with empathy, and foster positivity in all we do.



COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES
of MID-FLORIDA



CLSMF.ORG