

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the incredible progress we have made in our mission to provide access to justice for those in need. CLS has grown tremendously over the last five years and this past year has been no different. Because of your support and commitment to CLS ensuring all Floridians have access to counsel, our organization, message, and mission are strong. In addition to the nearly 10,000 requests for legal assistance that helped over 8500 families, I am honored to share some of our key milestones from last year that furthered our mission of Legal Access For All.

Of most significance, we implemented strategies to create long-term financial sustainability. In fact, we took a historic step by launching an endowment to secure the future of our organization. This fund will support our mission, allowing us to expand our reach and impact for future generations. I am pleased to announce the fund is already over \$1,000,000 and growing.

We have also sought to increase our already strong public support. To further strengthen our organization as we gain more and more reach within and outside of our twelve counties, we have established an Advisory Council. The Council brings together distinguished leaders from legal, business, and philanthropic communities. Their expertise, guidance, and influence will be invaluable as we continue to work towards our goal of Legal Access for All.

Expanding our outreach efforts, we launched our new television production, Law Talk. This program, in partnership with WFTV, raises public awareness on potential legal issues, provides the public with resources, and helps to bridge the gap between legal complexities and challenges people face every day. Through this initiative, we empower individuals with knowledge to navigate the legal system more effectively.

Finally, in our effort to make lawmakers more aware of how we help constituents and why legal access is an essential part of good governance, we hosted the first annual Legal Aid Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee. This event welcomed all the legal aid organizations across the state to educate policymakers on the critical role of legal services in our communities. This event marked a new line of engagement and visibility for our cause.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and dedicated team. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring legal access for all. Thank you for being part of this journey—we look forward to another year of progress and know that together, CLS is, and can remain, a PILLAR in our community.

With gratitude,
Jeffrey D. Harvey
Chief Executive Officer

ABOUT CLS

Community Legal Services *Legal Access For All*

Community Legal Services (CLS) is a not-for-profit organization that provides civil legal assistance to qualified individuals within a 12-county area around Central Florida.

More than one million individuals are eligible for our services. Our attorneys and advocates assist nearly 10,000 people in the region each year. Our legal aid organization offers professional legal services aimed at helping vulnerable populations safeguard their livelihoods, health, and families. We strive to facilitate access to legal information, provide legal assistance and representation, and help the most vulnerable and disenfranchised residents of Central Florida understand their rights.

Primarily funded through federal, state, and local government grants and appropriations, and private funders, we assist in noncriminal legal areas.

The 2022 LSC Justice Gap Report indicates that

92%

of low-income individuals do not receive sufficient legal assistance for their civil legal matters.

OUR MISSION

Enhancing the lives of those we serve through legal support, assistance, and education.

OUR 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.

PILLAR

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 see opportunities to increase our impact. We listen to all ideas, embrace change, and see 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 and embrace diversity, communicate with empathy, and foster positivity in all we do.

OUR PROGRAMS



Children's Rights & Special Education — Advocate for students to increase services, reduce suspensions and expulsions, protect the rights of those with disabilities, and combat discriminatory practices for disability, race, and gender.



Community Economic Development — Assist nonprofits and small businesses across the State of Florida in their community development activities by assisting with formation, governance, and various business activities.



Consumer — Protect consumers' rights and ensure they are being treated fairly and justly in their financial transactions and interactions with businesses.



Disaster Recovery — Assist survivors of disasters with legal issues that were caused or impacted by the disaster and identifying other available resources to help them recover.



Fair Housing — Combat housing discrimination based on federal, state, and local laws related to housing sales, rentals, advertising, lending, construction, and insurance underwriting on the basis of all the protected classes.



Family — Prioritize assistance to survivors of domestic violence to promote family stability including injunctions for protections and additional family cases to address long-term family needs.



Helpline — Answer client calls and guide them through various legal issues by providing holistic advice and brief services.



Housing — Focus on renters' rights, reverse mortgage foreclosure prevention, and other housing-related issues with the goal of preserving the client's right to remain in their home safely.



Housing and Consumer Counseling — Provide education, tools, and guidance to reach the goals of each individual and help them identify obstacles, credit improvement, savings, and sustainability by changing behaviors.



Medical Legal Partnership — Provide legal counsel that assists in removing barriers to good health, health care access (through Medical Legal Partnerships), and other basic needs such as housing, income, and safety.



Older Adults — Assist seniors and relative caregivers with matters that impact their healthcare, housing, safety, and independence.



Public Benefits — Help to secure and maintain benefits that create stability for medical, income, and food assistance.



Pro Bono — Expand our capacity to serve our clients and community through our dedicated pro bono attorneys who assist with matters that support our firm's mission across all of our priorities.

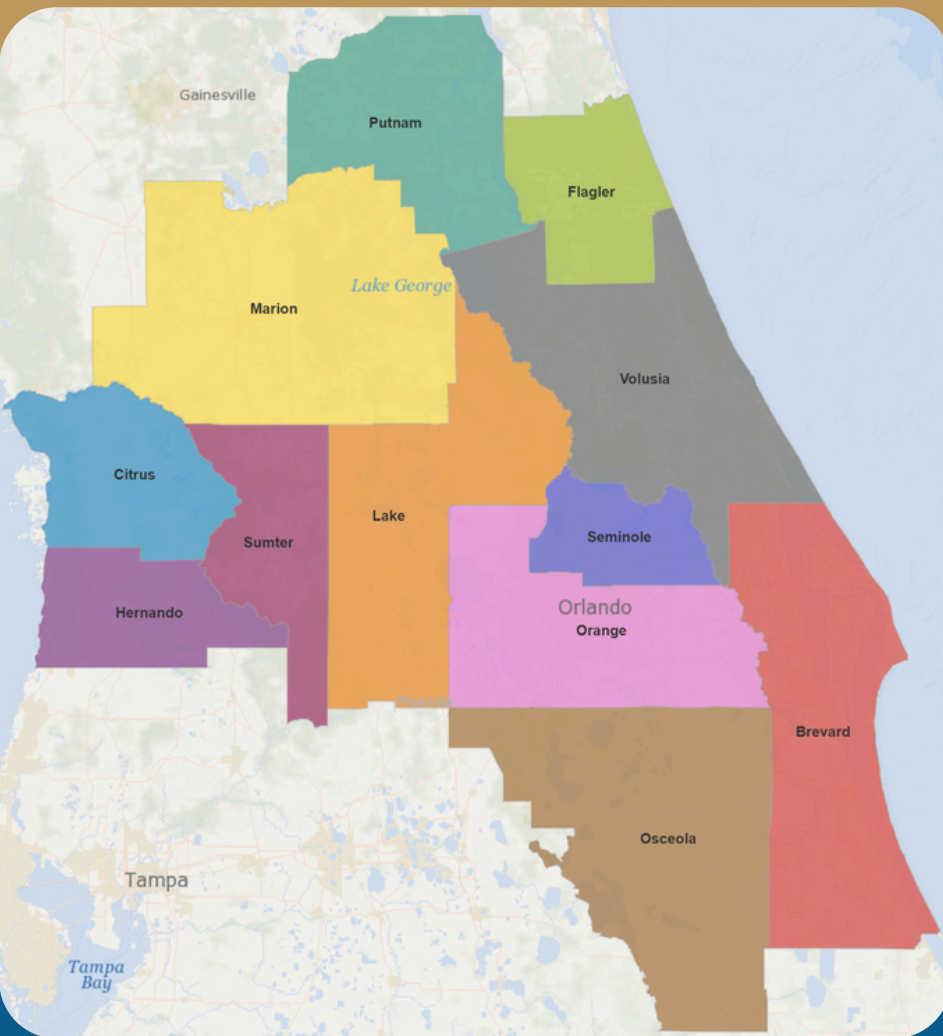


Real Property Rights Protection — Preserve housing by transferring/clearing title to real property and enhance generational wealth.

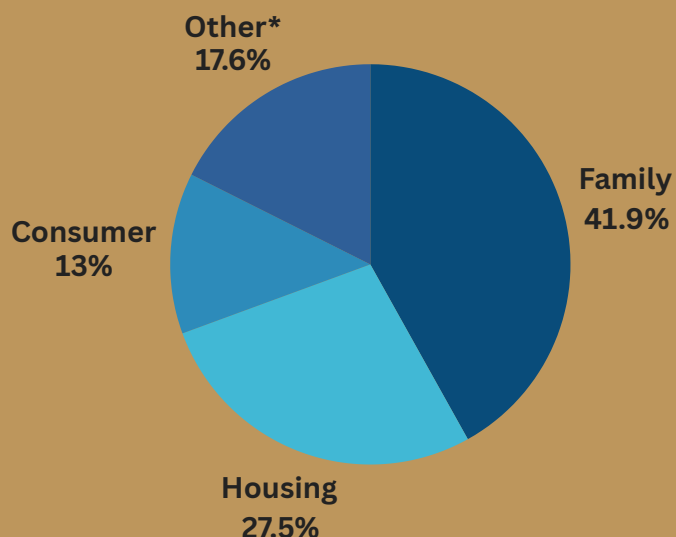


Veterans — Serve veterans and their families by assisting with military discharge upgrades, appeals on VA Service Connected Disability denials and reductions, and appeals on survivor benefit claims.

SERVICE AREA



PRACTICE AREA BY NEED SERVED



BREVARD COUNTY

- 6,875 legal hours serving clients
- 1,009 matters handled for clients

CITRUS COUNTY

- 4,424 legal hours serving clients
- 996 matters handled for clients

FLAGLER COUNTY

- 3,244 legal hours serving clients
- 683 matters handled for clients

HERNANDO COUNTY

- 3,186 legal hours serving clients
- 821 matters handled for clients

LAKE COUNTY

- 7,430 legal hours serving clients
- 1,598 matters handled for clients

MARION COUNTY

- 10,179 legal hours serving clients
- 3,313 matters handled for clients

ORANGE COUNTY

- 26,636 legal hours serving clients
- 3,668 matters handled for clients

OSCEOLA COUNTY

- 14,834 legal hours serving clients
- 3,794 matters handled for clients

PUTNAM COUNTY

- 4,369 legal hours serving clients
- 712 matters handled for clients

SEMINOLE COUNTY

- 5,783 legal hours serving clients
- 1,078 matters handled for clients

SUMTER COUNTY

- 2,303 legal hours serving clients
- 367 matters handled for clients

VOLUSIA COUNTY

- 21,962 legal hours serving clients
- 3,665 matters handled for clients

*Other: Income Maintenance, Individual Rights, Education, Health, Employment, Juvenile, Miscellaneous

SERVICE AREA POPULATION

County	Total Population 2024*	Service-Eligible Population 2023+ (200% of Poverty Level)	Service-Eligible Population Percentage 2023+ (200% of Poverty Level)
Brevard	653,703	169,309	25.9%
Citrus	166,151	58,651	35.3%
Flagler	136,310	37,485	27.5%
Hernando	210,577	67,595	32.1%
Lake	433,331	116,132	26.8%
Marion	419,510	155,638	37.1%
Orange	1,511,568	488,236	32.3%
Osceola	451,231	159,284	35.3%
Putnam	76,138	38,374	50.4%
Seminole	493,282	120,854	24.5%
Sumter	156,743	35,737	22.8%
Volusia	594,643	185,529	31.2%
Total	5,303,187	1,632,824	30.79%

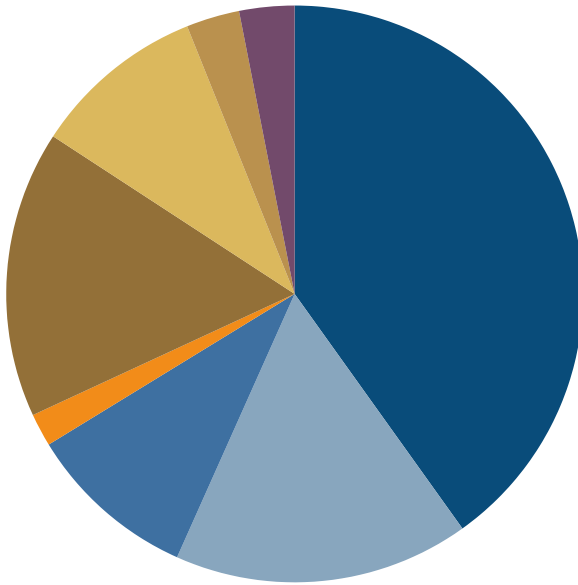
The Federal Poverty Level: \$31,200 for a family of 4
Service-Eligible (200% of Federal Poverty Level):
\$62,400 for a family of 4

*Florida Population Estimates by County and Municipality, Florida Legislature, Office of Economic and Demographic Research,
October 15 2024

+FLHealthCharts.gov Census ACS Report, September 2024

2024 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

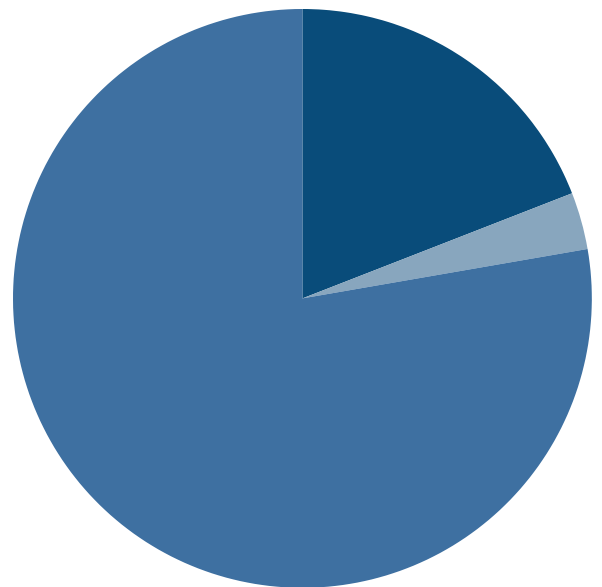
REVENUE: \$17,654,891



- Legal Services Corporation: 40%
- Other Federal Support: 17%
- Municipal Support: 9%
- Community Partnerships: 3%
- Funding Florida Legal Aid: 16%
- Contributions: 3%
- Asset Based Income: 2%
- In Kind Support: 10%

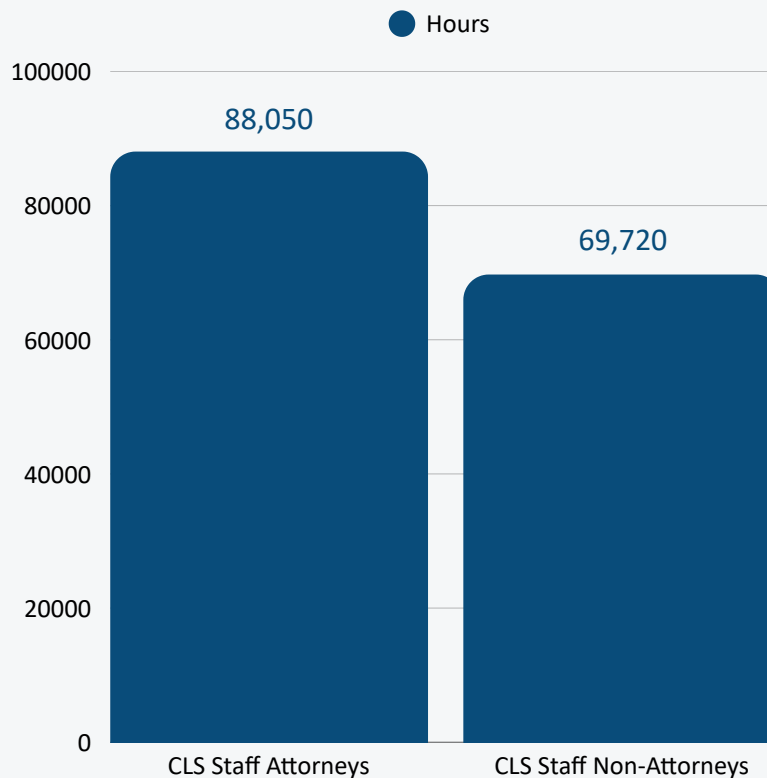
EXPENSES: \$17,853,646

- Management & General: 19%
- Fundraising: 3%
- Programs: 78%



MARKET VALUE

CLS Provided \$27.6 Million in Market Value of Legal Work



- **62** CLS staff attorneys with an average of **13.79** years of practice experience.
- CLS provided **\$27.6** million in legal services based on market rates of **\$275** per hour for attorneys and **\$50** per hour for legal staff.
- **216%** economic benefit provided to the community from our **\$15.4M** spend.

MAKING AN IMPACT



9,947 legal matters handled for **8,469** clients.



6,886 survivors of domestic violence protected with legal services including injunctions, divorce, and housing.



Legal assistance benefited **9,764** children with basic needs.



Enhanced the lives of **2,704** seniors through CLS programs offering support in social security, estate planning, and healthcare.



522 veterans assisted with housing, public benefits, and other legal matters.



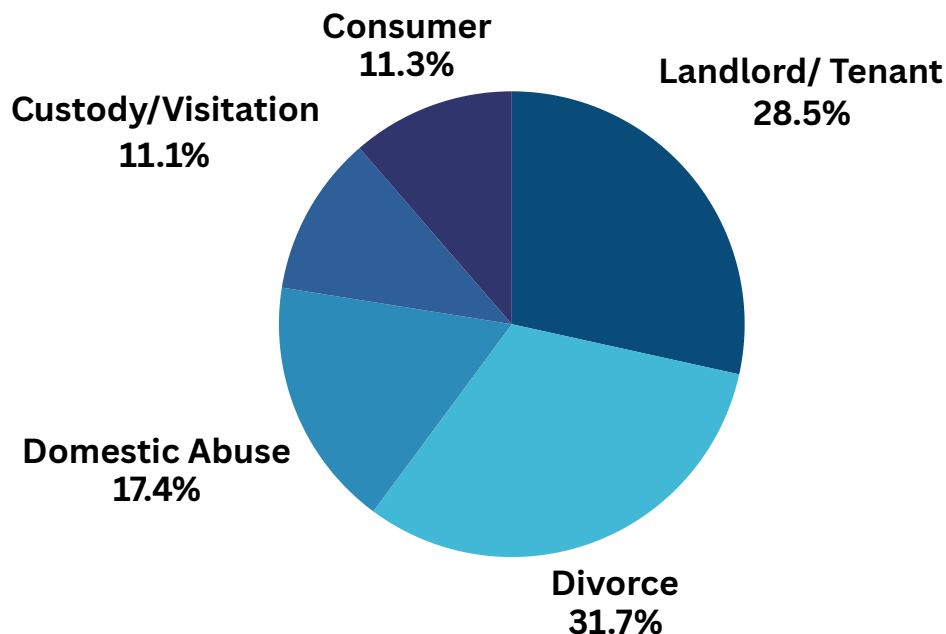
Protected **2,704** individuals with a disability from discrimination.



Educated **9,257** people at **787** in-person outreach events across our 12 counties.

BY THE NUMBERS

Cases in 2024 by Greatest Need



RAISING AWARENESS

STRENGTHENING DISASTER LEGAL AID: FLORIDA LEADERS CONVENE FOR COLLABORATIVE ROUNDTABLE

Jan 09, 2025 Top Stories



Participants prioritized key areas for improvement and addressed the increased ability to serve disaster survivors because of the Supreme Court's rule on IOTA funding, and

A roundtable discussion that convened leaders from across Florida to explore strategies for enhancing legal aid for disaster survivors was recently hosted by Community Legal Services in October 2024 at its Orlando office.

The event united representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Access to Justice, Osceola County Emergency Management, bar associations, and legal aid organizations, all dedicated to addressing

Roundtable discussion held October 2024; News of the discussed was shared on The Florida Bar News on January 9, 2025

Florida Legal Aid Groups On Front Lines Of Hurricane Relief

By Madison Arnold | October 18, 2024, 4:45 PM EDT • Listen to article

Less than a year after graduating from law school, Jason K. Susalla found himself in disaster relief work accidentally, starting in 2010 with Bay Area Legal Services Inc. in Florida as a part-time attorney on a phone intake team.

Nearly 15 years later, with Hurricane Milton roaring through the Sunshine State, Susalla was at the center of the relief efforts, exchanging messages with emergency management and other officials to provide assistance to those in need.



Two disaster survivors stand before their shelter after arriving in Fort Lauderdale Park, Florida, Sunday, which was destroyed by a tornado spawned in the outer bands of Hurricane Milton on October 11, 2024. (Photos by Kathleen Flynn for the Washington Post)

Posted on Law360 on October 18, 2024.

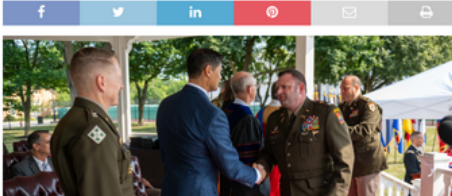
"I'm biased because I work in legal aid, but the people who work in legal aid are truly miracle workers and we do a lot with a very, very little bit. Volunteer assistance, funding, resources, it's always very limited in this space."



MORGAN CARDINAL
Community Legal Services of
Mid-Florida Inc.

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES' CEO JEFFREY HARVEY GRADUATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE

Jul 30, 2024 News in Photos



Posted on The Florida Bar News on July 30, 2024.

Night of Hope

The annual events commemorates the loss of victims and honors the resilience of domestic violence survivors.

By Jennifer Hunt Murty
jmurty@ocnagarazette.com

"So something, set something" and follow up with actionable support for those who need out of domestic violence. That was the message handed in attendance heard on Oct. 25, at the Night of Hope hosted by the Family Violence Prevention Workgroup.

The workgroup consists of representatives from social services, nonprofit and for-profit agencies, businesses and community members. Its mission is to end family violence in Marion County. The group organizes activities that increase public awareness through education, training and collaboration.

The need is great locally, as Marion County has one of the highest incidents of domestic violence in the state of Florida. Monica Bryant is the Family Violence Prevention Coordinator for the Marion County Children's Alliance. The workgroup, which she leads, provides emergency support to people fleeing from domestic violence. She told the audience



Monica Bryant, center, speaks at Victoria Mitchell, left, and Dana Martinez, right, took on during the "Night of Hope: Honoring Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence" event at the College of Central Florida Event Conference Center in Ocala on Monday, Oct. 25, 2024. (Bryant: Kaitlyn/Chris O'Connell; 2024)

that due to the lack of affordable housing, there are very few options for some families who are forced to leave their homes. Some must live in tents or their cars.

Bryant told the crowd: "It's sad, but it's true." The annual event, now in its 17th year under Bryant, historically honored each

See Night, page A5

Posted on Ocala Gazette on October 25, 2024.

CLS CEO Jeffrey Harvey was a finalist in the 2024 Victory Cup Initiative.



Shared on WESH 2.

2024 DIGITAL IMPACT

2024 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



Over 350,000 visitors used our Legal Self-Help Library at LegalAccessForAll.org



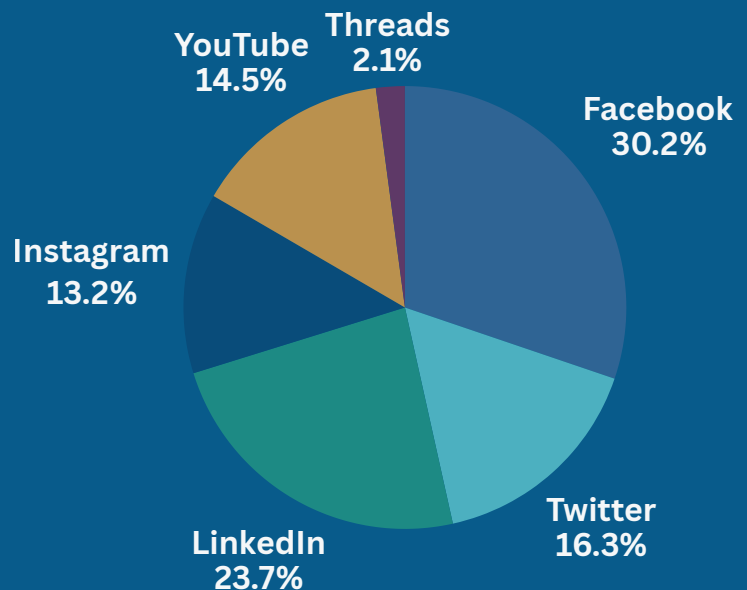
Averaging 1.8 self-help pages per session



Over 2.6 Million video views on YouTube



Reach of 501K
Interactions of 6.5K



NEW MEDIA

WFTV 9

LAW talk

BROUGHT TO
YOU BY:

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WFTV's Law Talk Turning Complex Legal Jargon into Everyday Talk

Notable experts will share their thoughts, insights, and advice regarding legal issues that many in our community will face.



5,973,245 Impressions

1,135,378 Reach

36,319 Clicks



<https://www.wftv.com/legal/>



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13 Episodes



910 Downloads



The (Un)Fair Housing Podcast explores the historical roots of housing segregation and examines the ongoing impact of the Fair Housing Act on minority communities, both in Central Florida and across the nation. Listeners will gain a deeper understanding of the complex factors shaping housing equity and access.

<https://unfairhousingpodcast.podbean.com>



The Pro Bono team partners with local bar associations, law schools, and law firms to offer civil legal aid to low-income clients in our service area.

- CLS hosted **212** legal advice clinics, connecting **843** clients with volunteer lawyers.
- **257** attorneys volunteered over **3,693** service hours, assisting **1,134** clients.

Director of the Office for Access to Justice Rachel Rossi Delivers Keynote Address at the 57th Annual Pro Bono Awards.



In 2022, we began recognizing some of our most active pro bono volunteers with TV segments on WFTV's Daily Two. We use the segment to highlight our volunteer attorneys by interviewing them on their purpose and dedication to serving clients through pro bono at CLS. We have been able to feature over 16 attorneys since the inception in 2022.



Airing on: **WFTV 9** & **27**

CLIENT STORIES

CLS Secures \$20,000 for Couple Misled by Fake Contractor



Lisa and Mark hired a handyman for repairs on their home. What they didn't know was the handyman they had hired was using a stolen contractor's license, leaving their home in disarray after failing inspection. Unsure of how to move forward, they sought legal help from Community Legal Services. Through strategic notices, demands, and mediation, a \$20,000 settlement was secured and wired directly to their account. With the funds in hand, they were finally able to hire a legitimate contractor and take back control of their home.

From Eviction to Stability: CLS Assists With Disability Claims

After suffering a stroke that left her unable to continue working, Mary came to CLS after she received an eviction notice. Together, we were able to apply for SSA disability, which was denied at first, but then benefits were granted during the reconsideration of the application.

Thanks to the help of CLS, Mary is receiving a monthly payment from SSA and has stable housing again.



LEGAL AID DAY 2024



Community Legal Services was honored to work with the Florida Civil Legal Aid Association (FCLAA) in organizing Legal Aid Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee on January 15, 2024. Throughout the day, legal aids from across the state tabled in the Capitol rotunda and hosted a reception to raise awareness about their work providing no-cost civil legal services to Floridians across the state.



LUNCH WITH LEGAL AID

CLS hosted “Lunch with Legal Aid” where legislators got to break bread with legal aid leaders within their service areas to strengthen relationships and foster connections aimed at improving the communities they serve together.



ADVISORY COUNCIL



The Advisory Council is founded on the premise of providing executive-level advice, counsel, and direction to ensure the continued success of executing Community Legal Service's mission of providing Legal Access for All. This elite group of community leaders is devoting their wisdom, professional expertise, and time.

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Dean and Professor of Law, Stetson University College of Law

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Former State Representative, Entrepreneur – DBMG Inc., Philanthropist

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2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Members of Community Legal Services (CLS) Board of Directors serve as ambassadors educating the community and building relationships that support our mission. Fiduciary duties include financial and program oversight, and broad policy-making.

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Ex Officio
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FUNDING PARTNERS



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.



FFLA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase access to the justice system for people of limited means by funding legal services, developing innovative tools and programs, and supporting legal aid providers and the courts. Through strategic grantmaking, FFLA 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. FFLA 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.



YOUR IMPACT

WHEN YOU INVEST

- Together we prevent illegal evictions, reducing homelessness.
- Together we hold contractors accountable for substandard work.
- Together we help residents facing foreclosure or overwhelming debt.
- Together we break the cycle of domestic violence.
- Together we collaborate with other nonprofits for an holistic approach to enhance community impact.

YOU WILL SUPPORT

- Vulnerable and exploited individuals and families.
- Veterans facing challenges to their health, financial, or housing stability.
- Domestic violence survivors and their children.
- Seniors targeted by scams.
- Families stabilizing their income and achieving affordable housing.
- Children with educational challenges.
- Individuals starting their own nonprofit or small business.



**With your support,
Legal Access For All
becomes more than a motto,
it becomes a reality.
Your tax-deductible donation
will provide access to justice for thousands of
families and individuals. Together, we can
change lives for the better.**

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES OF MID-FLORIDA, INC., A FLORIDA-BASED NONPROFIT CORPORATION, (REGISTRATION NO. CH76) MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE OR VISITING THEIR WEBSITE www.FDACS.gov. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. NO PROFESSIONAL SOLICITORS HAVE BEEN CONTRACTED BY OUR ORGANIZATION. THEREFORE 100% OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL BE RECEIVED BY CLSMF. CLSMF is funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). As a condition of the funding, it receives from LSC, it is restricted from engaging in certain activities in all of its legal work - including work supported by other funding sources. CLSMF may not expend any funds for any activity prohibited by the Legal Services Corporation Act, 42 U.S.C. 2996 et seq. or by Public Law 104-134. For donations more than \$250, Public Law 104-134 §504(d) requires that notice of these restrictions be given to all funders of programs funded by the Legal Services Corporation (45 CFR §1610.5).

COMMUNITY ALLIANCES



hope & help



CASA
CITRUS ABUSE SHELTER

Victory Cup
INITIATIVE



Helping People. Changing Lives.



Serving All Generations



for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership



CHILDREN FIRST



FLORIDA LEGAL SERVICES



REAL CHOICES. REAL CARE.



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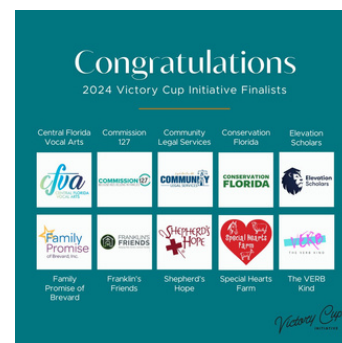
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- Adrianna Tran
- Erin Tudhope
- Craig Turner
- Arlene Udick
- Lewis Van Alstyne III
- Sonia Velez
- Michael Vermillion
- Wynn Vickers
- Jackie Vilaboa
- Visiting Nurse Association
- Benjamin Wallace
- Daniel Wallace
- Michelle Wargo
- Keith Warnock
- Dawn Welkie
- Cortez Whatley
- William Whitman
- Jenna Wickenhauser
- Patricia Wilder
- Jean Wilson
- Catherine York

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS



LEGAL ACCESS FOR ALL

Legal Access for All is our motto. We believe money should not be a barrier to justice, and no one should be without representation when they need it most. Studies show that 20% of families can't afford an attorney, yet they are also outside the funder restrictions that would allow us to help them.

Legal Access For All strives to bridge the Justice Gap.



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