



## Facts & Statistics

### Increased Need in the Pandemic

- As the national publication [Roll Call recently reported](#), "civil legal aid groups in the COVID-19 era are among the first responders for Americans who need help navigating the legal system to fight unfair evictions and foreclosures, get domestic abuse protective orders, obtain unemployment or unpaid wages, access health care, or respond to scammers."
- One of the most foremost researchers on access to justice issues recently underscored that point in a [Law360 interview](#), noting "there is going to be a massive increase in ordinary people's need for assistance with civil justice problems" as a result of the pandemic.
- Over a 3-week period starting in mid-March, Illinois Legal Aid Online (ILAO) saw a 1053% increase in the use of the site's unemployment resources (with over 120,000 people downloading these resources) and a 1084% increase in people accessing ILAO's emergency food stamp resources. These numbers continue to grow as more people are impacted by the economic downturn.
- At the same time as the need is vastly increasing, other major funding sources for legal aid are imperiled by the decline in interest rates and a significant pressure on state and local government budgets, [as recently reported by Law360](#).
- Chicago's COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grant program allocates \$2 million to Chicagoans who have shown they need help with rent or mortgage payments. 2,000 grants of \$1,000 each will be awarded through a lottery. 83,000 applications were received. This overwhelming response shows the depth of people's hardship as jobs are lost.
- In Chicago, black people make up about 30 percent of the population but account for about 70 percent of COVID-19 deaths. Long-standing systemic inequality makes black Americans less likely to be able to work from home, more likely to have chronic health conditions, and more limited health care access.
- Fraud and price gouging is on the rise. According to an article in [Crain's Chicago Business](#): "Through April 13, the Federal Trade Commission fielded more than 540 fraud complaints related to the outbreak in Illinois, according to the agency. The Illinois attorney general's office has reported handling almost 1,300 price-gouging reports."



## The Already-High Need for Legal Aid Before the Crisis

- Over 1.1 million people in Cook County—about 1 in 4—qualify for legal aid today.
- Studies have shown that about half of the people who qualify for legal aid will have a legal need over the course of a given year. That translates to about 600,000 low-income people who will have a legal need in Cook County this year. Additionally, tens of thousands of moderate-income Chicagoans struggle to find affordable legal help.
- Fewer than half of the people in need of legal help will be able to get it due to a shortage of pro bono and legal aid resources.
- As a result, many thousands of low-income and disadvantaged people—more than ever before—are going to court unrepresented. A recent national study estimates that in civil cases, at least one party is unrepresented in 3 out of 4 cases.
- The legal needs of low-income people run the gamut, from very simple questions that can be answered online or by court help desks, to complex problems that require hours of individual, and often specialized, legal counseling and extended representation.

## Legal Aid's Proven Impact—a Solid Investment

- CARPLS—Cook County's legal aid hotline which receives funding from the Campaign—provided over 60,000 legal consultations in 2019.
- Illinoisans visited [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org) 2.3 million times in 2019. Illinois Legal Aid Online, which receives funding from the Campaign, provides legal information and resources for the public to help people better understand their rights and responsibilities and assist them in navigating the legal system.
- **Having a Lawyer Matters:** Studies consistently show that in contested matters in court, the outcome often turns on whether or not a low-income or disadvantaged person has representation. Some findings from studies include:
  - **Domestic Violence.** Domestic violence survivors represented by an attorney are 2½ times more likely to be successful in obtaining a protective order than those who do not have a lawyer.
  - **Eviction.** Fully represented tenants win or settle their cases 96% of the time. A recent Chicago study found that almost 80% of landlords had lawyers, while only 11% of tenants did.
  - **Debt Collection.** A defendant with a lawyer was four times more likely to prevail in a debt collection case than a defendant who was unrepresented. Represented defendants secured a settlement in nearly 25% of the cases, compared to 6.4% for unrepresented defendants.
  - **Special Education.** In special education due process hearings without a lawyer, the parent and child won only 20% of the time. With representation, that number rose to 50%.



- **Unaccompanied Immigrant Children.** In almost half of the cases in which a child had a lawyer in immigration court, the court allowed the child to stay in the United States. When children appeared in immigration court without a lawyer, nine out of ten were ordered deported.
- **Asylum.** The single greatest factor that affects whether an asylum seeker wins or loses in immigration court is whether the applicant has a lawyer. Over the course of a year, only 11% of those without legal representation were granted asylum; with legal representation, the odds rose to 54%.
- A **major recent study** confirms that legal representation for low-income people has a number of other benefits, improving the experience for the litigants and significantly increasing court efficiency at the same time.
  - In landlord/tenant matters and contested child custody cases, legal representation dramatically improves court efficiencies and outcomes for low-income people. Representation by an attorney significantly increases the likelihood of settlement in eviction cases and the longevity of court orders in child custody cases, resulting in lower court costs and more family stability.
- Legal aid in Illinois produces an almost 2:1 economic return on investment according to a comprehensive Illinois **study**. The study's limited sampling of organizations alone produced economic benefits of more than \$70 million in a year.
  - By obtaining protective orders, divorces, child custody and legal recognition for domestic violence victims, a sampling of legal aid programs in the study saved \$9.4 million in costs that otherwise would have been required had they not received that legal help.
  - By assisting clients with foreclosures, evictions or other housing issues, just a small sample of legal aid programs avoided \$1.9 million in costs related to homelessness.

## The Legal Community's Increasingly Critical Role in Funding

- The legal community's support of legal aid is an increasingly critical source of funding. It has grown significantly over the past 13 years both through the Investing in Justice Campaign and in direct support to the many outstanding pro bono and legal aid organizations serving the community.
  - Since its inception in 2007, our legal community has collectively contributed more than \$17.5 million to the Campaign to support the work of our community's pro bono and legal aid organizations and their dedicated attorneys.
  - Over the same period, contributions from individuals directly to our community's pro bono and legal aid organizations have more than doubled.
  - Since the Campaign's inception, the number of individual donors to the Campaign has more than tripled. At the same time the number of individual donors to pro bono and legal aid organizations in the Chicago area has also grown significantly.



## Government Funding Not Keeping Up Despite the Growing Need

- While there have been new streams of funding for specific legal needs, the State's appropriation for broad-based legal aid through the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation is still less than the collective individual contributions to the Investing in Justice Campaign. At just \$1.4 million annually, Illinois is far below other large states like California, Texas and New York.
- While the Legal Services Corporation received an increase in its funding in 2019, since 1981 federal funding for legal aid has been cut in half in real dollars at the same time the need for legal aid has increased by over 50% to almost 60 million people eligible today.

## Our Combined Impact through the Campaign

- More than 30 pro bono and legal aid organizations and related initiatives receive funding from the Campaign and are able to help tens of thousands of low-income and disadvantaged people each year as a direct result.
- The Campaign funds a continuum of legal services to help people in need, ranging from web-based information and resources, legal aid hotlines, advice desks and clinics, to extended legal representation and larger impact litigation and advocacy.
- In 2019, pro bono and legal aid organizations funded through the Investing in Justice Campaign helped over 102,000 people in need.
- Last year, almost 13,000 people received brief advice and legal help at court-based advice desks that receive funding from the Campaign.
- Your contributions to the Investing in Justice Campaign leverage more than \$700,000 in support from other foundations and government entities that would not otherwise be available to organizations supported by the Campaign.

## Contributions Go a Long Way

- \$100 will help three people get brief advice and assistance at a help desk in the Circuit Court.
- \$250 will help seven people get brief advice on the CARPLS legal aid hotline.
- \$500 will help someone in need to get extended legal representation for many typical cases handled by pro bono and legal aid programs.
- \$1,000 will enable a domestic violence survivor to get an order of protection, an important step in providing safety and starting the journey to longer-term stability and independence.



## Impact Stories

*The five examples below are representative stories from the many thousands of low-income and disadvantaged people who depend on Chicago's pro bono and legal aid organizations to protect their safety and independence. Your Campaign contributions help make that possible through CBF grants to more than 30 pro bono and legal aid organizations and related initiatives, including the ones below.*

### A Second Chance at Freedom

Misty came to Legal Aid Society (LAS) as a survivor of domestic violence. She feared for her life, but the idea of leaving her abuser was daunting due to the many consequences leaving her partner would cause. With help from LAS' Domestic Violence Team, Misty was able to secure an order of protection, and she was connected with wraparound services like mental health and financial counseling that offered her the stability she needed during a traumatic and difficult time in her life.

The myriad of issues domestic violence survivors, like Misty, face is complex and often intertwined with financial, mental health, housing, and guardianship issues. Without comprehensive legal and social services, the sum of these problems may seem insurmountable to survivors of abuse. Fortunately for Misty, organizations like LAS exist, and she was able to receive the legal services necessary to live a safe and happy life free from abuse.

*"I was finally able to get away. Without the resources from LAS and Metropolitan, I probably wouldn't be here right now; I wouldn't have been able to leave him." – Misty, LAS Client*





## Impact Stories

### Creating Safe Workplaces

Rebecca was excited to start at her new job at a fast food restaurant. However, from the day she started, Rebecca's supervisor made lewd remarks to her and touched her inappropriately. Three days after she filed a police report against him, the boss fired her. Rebecca was unable to afford an upfront retainer when she tried to find a lawyer, and she proceeded to file her case by herself in federal court. The Presiding Judge contacted the Settlement Assistance Program (SAP) run by the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights' (CLCCR) to provide her with settlement counsel.

Within four days, two SAP volunteers picked up Rebecca's case. They learned that the restaurant had a video camera and that tapes confirmed her allegations. The volunteer attorneys sent a written demand and advocated for Rebecca at the settlement conference, where they negotiated substantial financial compensation and an apology from her former supervisor. With the help of SAP volunteer attorneys, Rebecca's case was closed in just 45 days, and she was able to move on from this incident knowing that everyone has the right to be safe in their workplace and that there are services and people, like the SAP, here to ensure that.

### Breaking Down the School to Prison Pipeline

At 13, Vanessa struggled to manage her anger. She was arrested and referred to court for hitting another student in school. Unfortunately, this arrest launched a pattern that's far too common: Suspension. Arrest. Prosecution. Punishment. Repeat.

Over the course of a decade, the Moran Center advocated for appropriate legal outcomes for Vanessa in the courts so that she could avoid incarceration and receive community-based services at home. They spoke on Vanessa's behalf in school to put in place the supports and services she needed to learn, and they navigated complex government bureaucracies to ensure she obtained critical public services and benefits. Most recently, through the Moran Center's Expungement & Sealing Help Desk, Vanessa was able to seal her criminal record.

Without a criminal background holding her back, she secured full-time employment, as well as a two-bedroom apartment for herself and her young son. Vanessa's life looks a lot different going forward thanks to the Moran Center.



## Impact Stories

### Strengthening Communities through Restorative Justice

Chris could have been another statistic. As a young-adult male in one of Chicago's disadvantaged neighborhoods, he found himself facing a felony charge. Since this was Chris' first felony arrest, his case was transferred to the North Lawndale Restorative Justice Community Court (RJCC).

RJCC connected Chris with a Lawndale Christian Legal Center (LCLC) case manager, a peace circle keeper, and various services in the North Lawndale community. Working with his LCLC case manager, Chris participated in restorative justice practices and set goals for himself in order to create a better life and engage in meaningful activities. Through the assistance of his LCLC case manager, Chris enrolled in the Manufacturing Careers Internship Program. He then interviewed with companies and obtained a 6-week paid internship. Chris successfully completed his internship and the company hired him as a full-time employee.

After gaining employment, opening his first bank account, and accomplishing the other goals he set, Christopher's felony case was officially dismissed. Today, he continues to work at the same company and is saving to move into his own apartment. He has stayed connected with his community and the staff at LCLC. Through determination, perseverance, and the right support systems, Chris is now on the right track in his life.

### Bringing the Arts to Communities that Most Need Them

Anthony had recently retired from his career as a professional dancer at a premier ballet company in Chicago. After his retirement, Anthony wanted to start his own nonprofit with the goal of bringing modern dance to underserved communities in Chicago. Not knowing where to start with this endeavor, he approached Lawyers for the Creative Arts (LCA) for help.

After attending LCA's Nonprofit Start-Up Workshop, Anthony was able to complete his IRS application for nonprofit status and gain valuable business strategy advice. Since its creation, his organization has seen tremendous growth in the number of Chicago Public Schools and students it serves, and it is now the recipient of multiple grants from local foundations. Furthermore, he has been able to inspire others by speaking about his successes at LCA's Nonprofit Start-Up Workshops and by being honored at LCA's 2018 Benefit.

Without the proper legal knowledge, starting a nonprofit can be a daunting task. However, with the help of organizations like LCA, people are able to take those first steps toward turning their dreams into a reality and helping our communities thrive.