

A photograph of a woman and a young girl standing in a snowy forest. The woman is wearing a black coat and a red scarf, and the girl is wearing a grey coat. A dog is sitting in the snow in the foreground. The background is a dense forest of snow-covered trees.

NH CAMPAIGN FOR LEGAL SERVICES

Equal Access to Justice for All

2016
Annual Report

Welcome.

We are a growing community of legal professionals, businesses, and concerned citizens who believe that the quality of justice you receive should not depend on how much money you have.

NH CAMPAIGN FOR LEGAL SERVICES

The Campaign for Legal Services brings together New Hampshire's business, legal, and philanthropic communities to support the Legal Advice & Referral Center (LARC) and New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA).

These two organizations provide civil, noncriminal legal aid to people who have nowhere else to turn when they are struggling to navigate the legal system.

Donations to the Campaign are tax-deductible.

Support the Campaign through secure online giving: www.nh-cla.org

Questions? Contact: Sarah Palermo at 603-369-6650 or spalermo@nhla.org

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Join us. Help fulfill the American promise of justice for all.

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On the cover: Like thousands of other New Hampshire residents in 2016, Julie needed civil legal aid to help her escape domestic violence. She is pictured with her daughter Caroline and their dog Birdie. Read Julie's story on page 7.

NOTE: In most cases client names have been changed throughout this document.

No one should have to fight alone...

You and I are probably a lot alike, dear reader. We have been blessed with many opportunities in our lives. When we face a challenge we can't tackle alone, we know who to call for help.

But *what if* we didn't? *What if* you were a single mom in a minimum-wage job, illegally evicted from your apartment? What if you were a senior on a fixed income, wrongfully denied medical care? Or a victim of domestic violence, isolated from friends, family and employment? Could you defend your rights in court? Would you know where to go for help?

Julie faced that challenge. So did Greta, and David and Gabriel. In this report, you'll see how civil legal aid was a critical support as they rebuilt their lives. It is due, in part, to the many supporters listed in this report that New Hampshire Legal Assistance and the Legal Advice and Referral Center were there for them and for more than 10,000 other people last year.

Too often, people in New Hampshire must fight these battles on their own. Despite the fact that civil cases can cost people their home, health care, custody of their children or even their sense of personal safety, the majority of civil litigants who cannot afford an attorney have no access to legal help.

No veteran should ever have to live on the streets because our society does not adequately fund civil legal aid. No family should have to defend themselves alone in court against a wrongful eviction or foreclosure. No victim of domestic violence should live in fear for her and her children's safety just because she can't afford legal help.

The Campaign for Legal Services is our way of standing up and saying, you do not have to fight this battle alone. If you were part of our efforts last year in raising almost \$294,000, **thank you**. Your support helped these programs change lives.

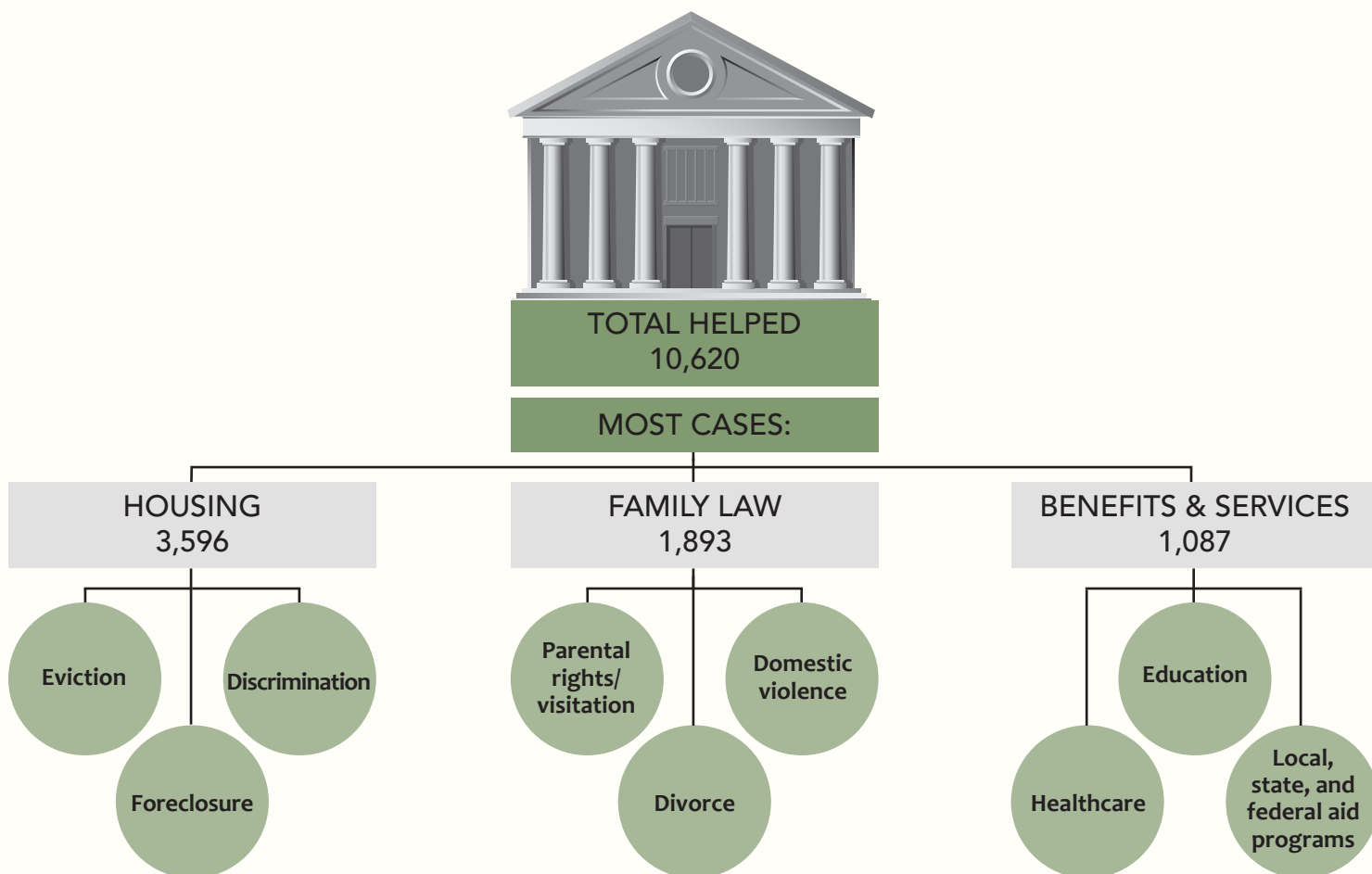
If you have not yet joined us, please, read the stories in this report. When you're done, consider, *what if* America truly lived up to our promise of "justice for all"? *And what if you helped us get there?*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Sanders, Jr." in a cursive script.

Jack Sanders, Jr., Chair

Legal Aid in New Hampshire



Worked with almost **2,000 individuals and families** to resolve domestic violence issues.



Helped **more than 60 at risk youth** receive the educational, social, and/or health care services they need.

47% of our clients have household income **below** 100% of the federal poverty level*



Federal Poverty Level (2016):

One person household: \$11,770
Two-person household: \$15,930
Three-person household: \$20,090
Four-person household: \$24,250



Most people seeking legal aid are trying to prevent homelessness, access benefits and services, or protect themselves and their families from domestic violence...



2,793 children

990 people with disabilities





1,257 seniors

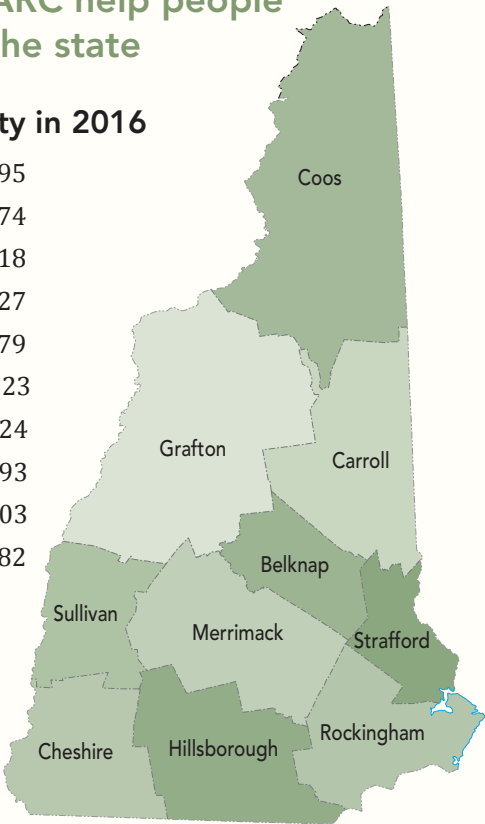
277 veterans




NHLA and LARC help people throughout the state

Cases by County in 2016

Belknap:	495
Carroll:	274
Cheshire:	418
Coos:	327
Grafton:	679
Hillsborough:	3,123
Merrimack:	1,124
Rockingham:	1,593
Strafford:	1,003
Sullivan:	682

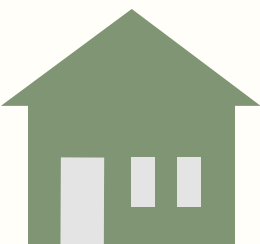





Legal aid helped clients secure

\$1.1 million

in federal benefits and child support payments in 2016



Almost **40%** of our clients sought help to prevent homelessness



In 2016, **3,096** volunteer hours were logged at LARC and NHLA offices

Housing

Every week, NHLA and LARC receive requests for urgent help from New Hampshire residents facing imminent homelessness. Illegal eviction or some other legal problem associated with subsidized housing are usually the reasons we get involved.

Through its Housing Hotline, LARC advocates help clients avoid illegal evictions by providing them with self help instructions by telephone.

NHLA advocates promote equal access to housing by preventing illegal evictions, challenging discriminatory housing practices, and engaging in community outreach. Through the Foreclosure Relief Project, NHLA collaborates with LARC, the Pro Bono Program, and HomeHelpNH to prevent homelessness by either resolving cases so homeowners can keep their property or negotiating a smooth and graceful exit with a plan for an affordable next home.

We also expand capacity by helping tenant associations understand housing policies, change unfair policies, and preserve affordable units at risk of being lost to market rates.

NHLA and LARC also collaborate with advocacy groups involved in affordable housing initiatives. Representation of individual clients gives our attorneys and paralegals great insight into the systemic problems that produce housing shortages and instability for low-income people. We use this knowledge to advocate for changes to agency rules and regulations at the local, state, and national levels, and to push for legislative action and reform at the state level.

Highlights —2016

- Through eight housing discrimination cases in 2016, NHLA secured \$38,000 in damages for clients. In many cases, having legal counsel also helped these clients avoid eviction and homelessness.
- NHLA held four events across the state to train new members of the Fair Housing Testing program, and completed 59 tests in New Hampshire in 2016.

Fair Housing testing is a controlled method for measuring and documenting if protected classes of people – such as immigrants, people with disabilities, or families with children – are facing discrimination. For example, a test for racial discrimination in rental housing might involve sending two testers – one white and one a person of color – to an apartment building to inquire about the same type of apartment. The testers are matched for all characteristics except the one being tested. After visiting the building, each tester provides a detailed account of the experience.

Since it is not always obvious to renters, homebuyers, or applicants for loans or insurance that they have been subjected to a discriminatory housing practice, testing has become a critically important and necessary investigative tool for enforcing fair housing laws.

We were in the ultimate worry mode. Were we going to be homeless?



“Once I talked to Steve, I knew what my rights are, and I wasn’t afraid anymore.”

David served as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division; as he liked to put it, he jumped out of perfectly good airplanes for a living. After his service, he worked for decades as a truck driver, until multiple injuries left him fully disabled. Now, he and his wife Penny care for their grandchildren in their Manchester apartment.

One day, David discovered an eviction notice left in his mailbox. The notice gave no explanation; it simply ordered David and Penny to leave their apartment before the end of the month. He later learned his landlady had sold the building, and the new owners wanted to move into their unit.

David and Penny scrambled, and found a new apartment, but it wouldn’t be ready until a week after the notice required them to move out. He called several agencies for help, including the Veterans Administration, but no one had any clear answers about his rights.

“We were in the ultimate worry mode. Were we going to be homeless? I wasn’t going to let her put my grand-babies out in the cold,” David says.

At his wits’ end, David called LARC and spoke with housing advocate Steve McGilvary.

“The very first thing Steve told me was, ‘Yes, you have rights, and here’s what they are.’ That right away made me breathe easier.”



David, Penny, and their two grandchildren are now safe and sound in their new apartment.

Steve pointed out the many legal deficiencies in the notice David’s landlady had written, and walked him through the process of filing his response. The legal process guaranteed that David, Penny and the kids could stay in the apartment until their new home was available. And with Steve’s guidance, David got the case completely dismissed.

“I didn’t want this on my record as an eviction because it could keep haunting us down the line,” David said. “But I was scared when I thought about going to court, because I figured she would have a lawyer, and there’s no way I could afford one. Once I talked to Steve, I knew what my rights are, and I wasn’t afraid anymore.”

Domestic Violence

We believe everyone deserves a safe home, free from abuse and violence. But at least 1-in-3 women and 1-in-4 men in New Hampshire report being assaulted by an intimate partner. On a daily basis, victims of domestic violence and families in crisis reach out to New Hampshire's legal aid programs for advice and protection.

LARC operates a divorce and parenting hotline in English and Spanish that provides clients with legal advice and counsel over the phone on current or pending legal issues. LARC also maintains a website of self-help guides for anyone facing domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

NHLA attorneys represent victims of domestic violence in protective order proceedings, as well as divorce, child support, and parenting cases. NHLA frequently advocates for the interests of domestic violence survivors in public policy discussions. LARC also works with NH Pro Bono Program volunteer attorneys to secure representation for eligible low-income victims of domestic violence in divorce and parenting hearings.

Both organizations maintain strong relationships with the New Hampshire court system, and with community-based health and social service providers. These relationships, strengthen outreach to victims, empower survivors, and facilitate abuse-prevention efforts.

Our programs are also active participants in the conversation about social, economic, and cultural issues that perpetuate domestic violence. We recognize how these issues create additional barriers for victims and survivors of domestic violence who need legal help to navigate divorce and parenting issues.

Highlights —2016

- As a member of the state's Family Mediator Certification Board since 2015, NHLA Domestic Violence Advocacy Project Co-Director Erin Jasina has been working to improve the way mediators screen cases for domestic violence. "Mediation is really not safe and appropriate in divorce and parenting cases where there has been abuse," Jasina says. "Abusers do not approach mediation with a good faith effort to resolve the case. For them, it's another avenue to control and harass and abuse their victim." With the other members of the board, Jasina developed new standard guidelines for mediators to screen cases for abuse. With these new guidelines, the hope is that all divorce and parenting cases are given thoughtful screening before mediation.
- Additionally, Jasina will be working this year with the Strafford County Visitation Center to propose a new, more safety-focused First Appearance for divorce cases involving children and parenting cases. This new structure could result in First Appearances that educate all parties about domestic violence and its impact on children, and give victims a clear understanding of their right not to participate in mediation. This will also lead to better self-screening of cases before they are referred to mediation.

You never think it'll get to that place, but it did. I knew it had to stop.



Julie didn't realize it until she tried to get away, but her abusive boyfriend had spent years gradually isolating her. After she moved in with him in the North Country, he made it almost impossible for her to see friends or family, or work and save money of her own.

Then came the day he threw pieces of wood from the wood splitter at her, leaving her with a concussion and bloody head wound.

"He had thrown things at me before, glasses, dishes, furniture," Julie said. "You never think it'll get to that place, but it did. I knew it had to stop."

With help from NHLA, Julie petitioned for and received a protective order, child support and a court order allowing her and the children to stay in the house to finish the school year.

Too often, survivors don't know what support they can request from the court. Without appropriate support, they often feel they have to choose between being homeless, or returning to the abuse.

"That's just not something I could have done on my own," Julie said. "Thank God for legal aid. He had a lawyer, and I was so afraid to go to court to face them. Legal aid was the only solution when I had no one else to turn to."

"Legal aid was the only solution when I had no one else to turn to."

Julie's ex continued to harass her through the court's order allowing him supervised visitation with their daughter. As required, Julie quickly filed paperwork at the nearest supervised visitation center. But her ex refused to comply with the center's requirements, and instead yelled at the center staff.



Julie and Caroline are safe in their new home in the North Country.

Julie soon found new affordable housing. But given her ex's behavior regarding the visitation and his refusal to attend court-ordered batterer's intervention classes, she was still concerned for her safety.

Her NHLA advocate drafted a motion to extend the protection order before it expired. To support her request, Julie convinced the visitation center staff to write a letter about the aggressive way he spoke to them. The Court extended Julie's protection order for another year.

"You can say it's just a piece of paper, but it gives me peace of mind and it's helping us rebuild. It's helping us start over."

Health and Public Benefits

Genetics, diet and exercise aren't the only factors that affect our health. In fact, new research is showing they aren't even the main influence. Social determinants of health – such as access to affordable healthy food, safe housing, clean water and preventative health care – have as much impact as genetics. Legal aid helps people get and stay healthy in a number of ways.

Seniors, veterans and other individuals living with disabilities, for example, need legal help and advice if they are denied the benefits to which they are entitled.

Our programs also help individuals and families access unemployment compensation and temporary assistance programs, such as food stamps and local welfare programs.

LARC helps hundreds of people every day through phone support and thousands more each year turn to the self-help guides and other resources found at their website nhlegalaid.org. NHLA advocates represent and advise people in securing and maintaining the federal and state benefits they need.

Strong partnerships with the community-based healthcare, social service, and disability support organizations have enabled us to expand our advocacy efforts on behalf of veterans and seniors over the past several years, and we see this area of our work continuing to grow in the years ahead.

Highlights —2016

➤ In 2016, legal aid staff helped New Hampshire residents secure more than \$1.1 million in income, mostly through child support or federal benefits they were entitled to receive. With this income, legal aid clients are able to pay their rent and utility bills and buy groceries for their families.

➤ NHLA worked with Manchester Community Health Center and Ammonoosuc Community Health Center last year to utilize federal funding and private grants to recreate medical-legal partnerships at the health centers.

Through the partnerships, legal aid staff train the medical staff to recognize when a patient's health problem might have a civil legal solution. The partnership has helped patients leave abusive homes, and remedy unsafe living conditions, such as mold or inadequate heating, that can negatively affect their health.

Research from the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership shows that legal aid reduces stress, helps people take medications on a more regular basis, and reduces hospital admissions for people with chronic illnesses.

If not for legal aid, we would not be in our home today.



“Knowing we will have a roof over our heads has brought us the greatest peace..”



Gabriel is a graduate of the US Naval Academy at Annapolis and an 18-year veteran of the US Navy. He is a homeowner in New Hampshire’s Seacoast region and a proud father. He is also permanently disabled due to his service – but he wasn’t always able to admit that last one, even to himself.

“The biggest challenge in this case was helping him let go of feeling ashamed to need disability benefits in the first place,” says NHLA Benefits Project paralegal Megan Dillon.

When he left the Navy, Gabriel was partially disabled due to chronic pain, anxiety and PTSD. He sought less demanding civilian work, but after a few years, that job was also impossible, and the Veterans Administration determined him 100 percent disabled.

The family tried to get by on his veterans benefits and his wife’s part-time salary, but eventually they fell behind on their mortgage.

Gabriel’s initial application for federal disability benefits was denied, and they turned to NHLA for help with the appeal when the bank filed to foreclose their home.

“It isn’t uncommon for people determined disabled by one agency to be denied by another,” Dillon says. “Gabriel and his wife, who is also a veteran, are very smart and highly educated people, but these are incredibly technical proceedings.

“Gabriel had down-played a lot of things in his initial application. It’s often hard for people like him, who worked their entire lives, to speak honestly with a judge about their disabilities.”

“If not for legal aid, we would not be in our home today,” Gabriel says. “It was hard on my ego to admit my inability to work. But it was worse to be denied the benefits my family needed. Now, my children are all doing well in health and in school. We continue to face challenges, but knowing we will have a roof over our heads has brought us the greatest peace.”

Dillon helped the family secure a retroactive benefit payment, which saved their home, and a monthly benefit so the family can afford the modified mortgage going forward.

“The house seemed to be the symbol of who he used to be as a husband and as a father; as a provider – it was a true representation of that past. We can’t reverse his physical and mental conditions, but at least we were able to save their home.”

Youth

The evidence is clear: completing high school makes a huge difference in an individual's life trajectory. There is a strong correlation between earning a high school diploma and finding a decent job, avoiding criminal activities, and *even living longer*.

Kids with learning disabilities or behavioral health issues are far more likely to drop out of school — often because they don't get the services they need to successfully advance and graduate.

The Youth Law Project helps kids with disabilities get the services they need so that they can stay in school and get the best start in life. NHLA advocates often get involved after a suspension, expulsion, or truancy violation. We work with school officials and the criminal justice system to avoid confinement and keep kids with their family, in school, and in their community.

The Youth Law Project is also involved in juvenile justice reform efforts, and has been involved in several recent initiatives to make the justice system more flexible and compassionate for juveniles, most notably raising the age of delinquency to 18, implementing consistent data collection practices, and training attorneys and Family Court judges about the unique impact the justice system can have on our kids.

Highlights —2016

- NHLA's Youth Law Project (YLP) serves as a leader in the statewide Juvenile Justice Coalition, which successfully advocated to change state law so minors tried as adults will be held at the Sununu Youth Services Center, rather than adult facilities, until they reach the age of majority.
- The YLP also successfully advocated for new provisions that aim to lower New Hampshire's alarmingly high rate of incarceration for non-violent and low level juvenile offenders. The new provisions will highlight instances of incarceration of these juvenile offenders, and require the Department of Children Youth and Families to find ways to lower the rate of incarceration.
- Working with a range of stakeholders, the YLP guided state lawmakers in implementing new requirements for memoranda of understanding between police departments and schools using school resource officers.
- YLP also successfully advocated for passage of laws designed to reduce the number of children who waive their right to counsel at the beginning of their delinquency cases. Ensuring access to legal services early almost always leads to better outcomes and prevents youth from sinking more deeply into the juvenile justice system.

Our biggest fear was that she'd fall so far behind in school.



Like many grandparents in New Hampshire, Janice and Jim didn't expect to be parenting again in their 70s. But when their granddaughter Chloe needed to move in with them in Conway, they didn't think twice about opening their home, even though she was struggling with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

"The bottom line is, there was no alternative. Giving up on her is not an option," Jim said.

But when Chloe and another girl at her school began fighting – first online and then at school – they didn't know what to do. They felt especially desperate after the other girl applied for a restraining order and Chloe was suspended from school.

"We've never been in court before, not once," Janice said. "We were very nervous. Our biggest fear was that she'd fall so far behind in school, and if something happened, if she didn't control herself, she would be arrested. Then that could be on her record, and it could hold her back forever. We just wanted to do what was best for her, but we didn't know what that was."

They called the Legal Advice & Referral Center, who connected them with the Youth Law Project at NHLA.

"We wanted to do what was best for her, but we didn't know what that was."

"I lost an awful lot of sleep before Michelle got involved," Janice said. "It was wonderful to have somebody capable and knowledgeable. When it all came out, the judge just said, 'You two girls, just stop it.' It was a back and forth thing and the judge could see it, but only after Michelle brought the facts out."



Janice and Jim worked with NHLA Attorney Michelle Wangerin, through the Youth Law Project, to keep their granddaughter in school.

Chloe is doing better now, passing all of her classes in school last year. The other girl involved apologized to Chloe, Jim and Janice.

"We have to go forward, and it is always getting better," Jim said. "There are very few fairy tale endings, but I don't need a fairy tale. I think everything is going to be alright and that's all we can ask for."

Seniors

As Americans, we believe that everyone—young, old, able-bodied, or disabled—deserves to live with dignity and with as much independence as possible. But the reality is, seniors often face significant challenges to their dignity and independence, and many aren't prepared to handle such challenges alone.

As a group, older adults are vulnerable to a range of problems involving their income and/or finances, housing, and healthcare or benefits. The Senior Law Project at NHLA was created to help adults over 60 understand and resolve these civil legal matters.

Seniors are the most victimized segment of the population when it comes to scams, fraud, and other types of financial malfeasance. Elder financial abuse is particularly tough to combat, in part because it often goes unreported. Many elderly victims are too confused, fearful, or embarrassed by the crime to report it. One recent study reported by Consumers Digest estimated that there are at least 5 million cases of this financial abuse in the United States each year, but law enforcement or government officials learn about only 1 in 25 cases.

All services provided by the Senior Law Project are free of charge, made possible through support from the Campaign, as well as the NH Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services, the NH Bar Foundation, United Ways, the Mary Gale Foundation, the Endowment for Health, and the Pearl Manor Fund.

As New Hampshire's population ages — representing almost one-third of the population by 2030 — a host of issues related to seniors will influence nearly every critical policy decision. Funding to maintain civil legal aid will ensure all of our seniors have a voice in that debate.

Highlights —2016

- Training allies statewide about elder financial exploitation, including organizing a statewide summit that took place in April of 2016.
- Continued participation in Financial Abuse Specialty Team to help combat financial exploitation.
- Promoting legislative adoption of the Uniform Power of Attorney Act, including important protections that will help prevent power of attorney abuse.
- Advocating against discriminatory provisions in state rules regulating assisted living facilities.
- Leading the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging in strengthening the infrastructure for elder advocacy.

It was destroying my grandmother to lose her home where she raised her family...



Ari reached out for legal aid to help his grandmother, who only wanted to age in dignity in the home that she and her husband bought 50 years ago.

After Greta's husband died, she gave her son Jack power of attorney, and signed ownership of her house to Jack and his wife Martha. They verbally gave Greta a "life estate," a promise that they would care for her in her home until her death.

But they quickly isolated her from other family and took complete control of Greta's checkbook. They required her to pay all of the household bills from her Social Security and her husband's life insurance.

Martha had episodes of violent outbursts, and eventually called the police to report that Greta, a physically small and frail woman in her 80s, assaulted her. After Martha filed for a restraining order, Greta was forced to leave her home and all her personal belongings. Then Jack and Martha put the home up for sale.

"It was destroying my grandmother, to lose her home where she raised her family," Ari said. Senior Law Project Director Cheryl Steinberg and Fair Housing Project Director Christine Wellington worked together on Greta's case.

"I can't even say how much gratitude I have..."



Greta (seated); standing: Fair Housing Project Director Christine Wellington, Dave, Ari, and Senior Law Project Director Cheryl Steinberg. The group gathered to celebrate Greta's 84th birthday shortly after Greta's case was closed.

"The first thing we did was to defend Greta in the restraining order case. Cross-examination quickly revealed who the real victim was," says Wellington.

They then obtained an injunction to stop the sale of the home and to protect Greta's personal belongings. The case was ultimately resolved in mediation.

"Greta's son and daughter-in-law did not honor their promise to care for her," Wellington said. "Instead they exploited her and abused her. Only the force of law could provide a venue for resolution of this case."

"The help from NHLA was imperative. I don't know where we would be right now if they hadn't won this case," Ari says. "I can't even say how much gratitude I have for Chris and Cheryl. My grandmother has her home back. She laughs all the time, she smiles all the time."

Systemic Advocacy

When the demand for legal services was last examined closely in 2010, experts estimated almost 150,000 New Hampshire residents were both eligible for and in need of legal aid. But that year, our state's civil legal aid programs were able to help fewer than 10,000 people.

As important as each individual case is to the client or family involved, often the best way to help struggling families is through reform of the system of rules and practices that affect poor people in our state.

NHLA maintains a consistent presence at the State House and before administrative rulemaking agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services, New Hampshire Employment Security, and the Public Utilities Commission. We focus our legislative work on policy and budget proposals that impact basic needs of vulnerable residents in areas including housing, education, health care, domestic violence, and energy/utilities.

Similarly, we focus our individual, group, class action, and appellate cases on those same basic human needs, recognizing that a single case may have the power to lift many people out of poverty. We rely on allied organizations to help us identify problematic and unlawful practices.

The magnitude of unmet need for legal aid by individuals makes this part of our work especially important. Success in our policy and litigation efforts can help hundreds — and even thousands — of New Hampshire residents stabilize and improve their lives.

Highlights —2016

- Worked with the NH Municipal Association to eliminate a penalty of 15 percent of assessed value, previously required for repurchase of principal residences after tax deeding — a big win for low-income homeowners!
- Together with steadfast allies from the NH Bar Foundation and the NH Bankers Association, NHLA also defeated a proposal to outlaw the IOLTA Program, a critical funding mechanism for civil legal aid.
- Defeated legislation that would have unnecessarily fast-tracked certain eviction cases, putting low-income tenants at a sharper disadvantage.
- Secured private grant funding to support several years of education, outreach, litigation and legislative advocacy on the issue of lead poisoning, which affects at least 1,000 children in New Hampshire each year, with potentially life-long consequences.
- Defeated several ill-conceived proposals including one which would have banned the use of Food Stamps in convenience stores for anything except milk.
- Defeated a particularly alarming bill, purported to disqualify members and supporters of foreign terrorist organizations from receiving benefits. At the bill's public hearing, it quickly became apparent that it was intended to prohibit all Muslims from receiving assistance.

Last summer, NHLA won a major victory benefitting low-income parents of children with disabilities.



“The Hendrick case will make a huge difference for many families.”



NHLA Attorney Ruth Heintz and NHLA Litigation Director Kay Drought met in Washington D.C., with the U.S. Justice Department, to inform the department’s amicus brief in the Hendrick case.

When Carrie Hendrick, a single mother, lost her job, she turned to the state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. However, she was found ineligible after two of her children were approved for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a federal program to support poor children with severe disabilities. The state had decided to consider the children’s aid as money available to support of the entire household, despite Congress’s intent that SSI be dedicated to the needs of children with severe disabilities.

NHLA appealed that decision on behalf of Carrie, and another mom and their children. The NH Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, agreed with NHLA and the allies who submitted amicus briefs, that the State’s policy was unconstitutional. This victory will help many families who are struggling to make ends meet while caring for children with severe disabilities.

Improving the systems that affect the lives of our clients often requires our program to work collaboratively with other organizations. The Disability Rights Center – NH submitted an amicus brief in the case on its own behalf and on behalf of the New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators and the National Disability Rights Network, supporting the mothers’ position.

“Families caring for children with disabilities often face immense obstacles to financial security, including the extraordinary costs of care and the loss of parental income,” said Andrew Milne, a DRC-NH staff attorney. “In this case, the Court restored the rights of children with disabilities and their families to receive the full benefit of two programs that are crucial to helping them overcome these obstacles and meet their basic needs.”

New Hampshire families are already benefiting from the decision. In December, NHLA helped a single mother facing eviction because she had fallen behind in her rent, and whose daughter is on SSI due to severe disabilities. Because of the Hendrick decision, this family can access financial stability through the temporary assistance program.

“The Hendrick case will make a huge difference for many families,” said Ruth Heintz, an NHLA attorney on the case. “When something unexpected happens, this is a temporary program that needs to be available to them and their children.”

Thank you

Every year, a growing community of law firms, businesses, private foundations, attorneys, and concerned individuals and families show their support for civil legal aid in New Hampshire. In 2016, we raised almost \$294,000 to help people in need of access to justice.

Gifts from Law Firms and Other Businesses

Visionary leader: \$15,000+

Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green PA

Pioneer of Justice: \$10,000 - \$14,999

Orr & Reno, PA
Pierce Atwood, LLP
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- The NH Community Loan Fund named a 2016 fundraising campaign in honor of NHLA Housing Justice Project Director Elliott Berry.
- NH Women's Foundation Board of Directors
- re-elected Sarah Mattson Dustin, who led NHLA's policy advocacy for several years, as the Vice Secretary.
- NHLA Foreclosure Relief Project Director
- Stephanie Bray was nominated to the Federal Court Advisory Board for the U.S. District Court of Concord.
- Fair Housing Project Director Christine Wellington
- was asked to author the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority's updated analysis of impediments to fair housing in New Hampshire.

Thank you volunteers: Janet Taylor, Anne "Nancy" Sears, Yasin Alsaidi, Katie Muzzy, Patience Morrow, Hannah Carlson, April Brees, Beth Ambury, Andrew Fischer, Mary Gaiser, Nat Morse, William Philpot Jr., Shawna Bentley, Erin Bucksbaum

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