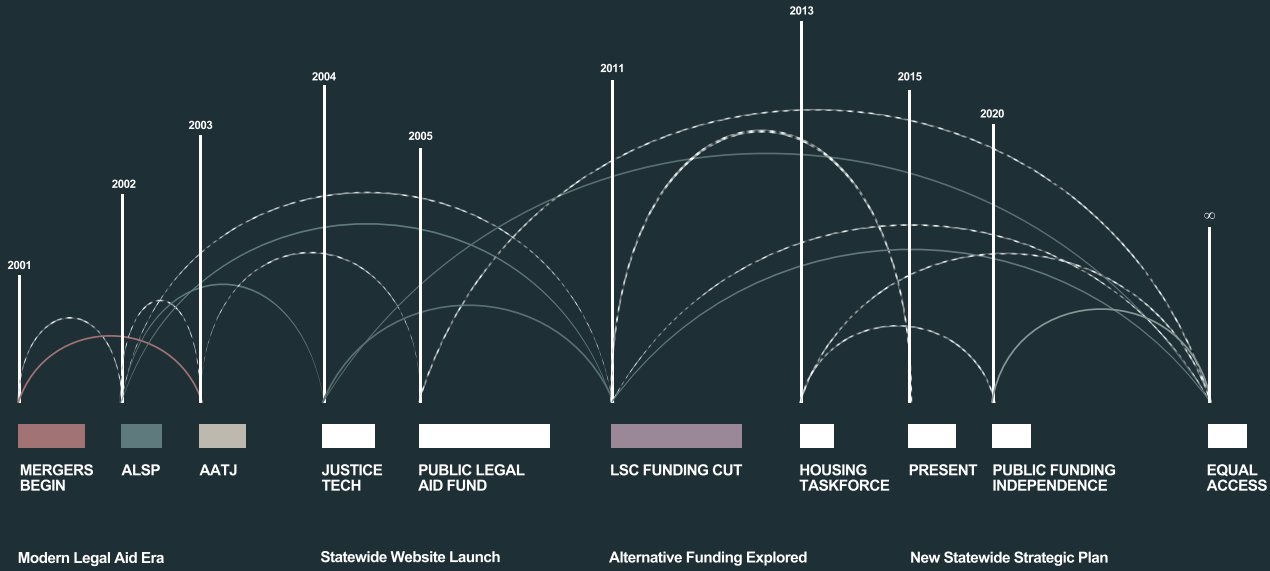




A FUTURE FOR JUSTICE



- Six organizations merge into two separate 501(c) (3) nonprofit organizations
- ALSP formed to coordinate statewide initiatives, trainings, and justice technologies
- AATJ is created by per curiam order of the Arkansas Supreme Court
- A Combined \$632,000 in annual funding was lost

The Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas are the only two free civil legal aid organizations in the state that provide direct client services. There are several organizations that work daily to help support these and several other statewide justice projects. Many partners are part of this effort, but there is one shared vision: to champion equal access to justice for all regardless of economic or social circumstances. Contact information for our legal aid and partner organizations is listed below.

Center for Arkansas Legal Services

Jean Carter, Executive Director
1300 West 6th St., Little Rock, AR 72201
501-376-3423 | www.arlegalservices.org



Legal Aid of Arkansas

Lee Richardson, Executive Director
714 S. Main St., Jonesboro, AR 72401
870-972-9224 | www.arlegalservices.org



CENTER FOR ARKANSAS LEGAL SERVICES

Arkansas Access to Justice Commission

Amy Dunn Johnson, Executive Director
1300 West 6th St., Rm 110, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
(501) 492-7172 | www.arkansasjustice.org



Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation

Amy Dunn Johnson, Executive Director
1300 West 6th St., Rm 113, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
(501) 492-7172 | www.arkansasjustice.org

Arkansas Legal Services Partnership

Vince Morris, Director
1300 West 6th St., Little Rock, AR 72201
501-376-3423 | www.arlegalservices.org

Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership

Vince Morris, Director
1300 West 6th St., Little Rock, AR 72201
501-376-3423 | www.arlegalservices.org

To champion equal access to justice for all regardless of economic or social circumstances

DEAR ARKANSAS LAWYER,

Over the past decade, we have witnessed worrisome trends in the ability of ordinary citizens to gain meaningful access to our civil justice system. These trends indicate a **clear and growing gap between the wealthy and the poor or middle class when it comes to affordability and accessibility of legal representation in civil cases**. The result is an enormous disparity between the general expectation that Americans have access to the courts to resolve their civil disputes and the actual reality—that access to justice in most civil matters is available only to the well-to-do. At the same time, emerging technologies, a growing “do-it-yourself” movement among the general public, and other forces are transforming the ways legal services are accessed and delivered.

We see some of these developments firsthand in Arkansas. **Almost a third of the 60,000 family law and probate court cases filed each year are initiated by self-represented litigants, and more than 90% of those cases have an unrepresented party on the other side.** The picture for financial and housing cases—debt collection, unlawful detainer, and foreclosure—is also striking. These cases are almost universally initiated by an attorney representing a creditor, but in nine of ten cases, no attorney appears for the individual defendant.

Economic barriers are not the only impediment for Arkansans with civil legal needs: **a dwindling and aging population of attorneys in rural areas of the state means that where one lives will likely determine his or her ability to access critical legal services.** A 2015 study indicates that the state's 25 most rural counties average fewer than 0.44 practicing attorneys per 1,000 residents. Seven of these counties have no attorneys licensed this millennium, and one has no attorneys at all. That study revealed another surprising finding: **of the state's 6,855 resident, active attorneys only 2,982 are currently in private practice.**

Our state is fortunate to have two nonprofit public interest law firms that provide free, high-quality legal representation for low-income Arkansans in all 75 counties of the state: the **Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas**. In spite of their limited financial resources, **CALS and LAA stretch the dollars they receive in innovative ways, allowing them to help more than 10,000 clients each year with a combined staff of only 64 attorneys and paralegals.** In 2014, these two programs provided services at a cost that was \$8 million less than the equivalent cost of such services in the private legal market, ultimately resulting in **more than \$27 million in economic activity** in the state.

Arkansas attorneys, law firms, and corporate partners are lending their support to these efforts. Last year, **950 attorneys volunteered to take pro bono cases** for legal aid clients. Together, they put in more than **7,400 hours** of work on these cases. In addition, a total of 526 individuals, 19 law firms, and 14 corporate donors made financial or in-kind contributions to support the **Campaign for Legal Aid**. The names of contributors and pro bono attorneys who accepted referrals from legal aid are listed on the pages that follow.

The UALR William H. Bowen School of Law and University of Arkansas School of Law are proud to partner with the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission, the Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation, the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership, and the Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership in a shared vision of access to justice for all. That vision requires that we look ahead to the future of how our profession can embrace these challenges through innovation, new models for educating tomorrow's legal professionals, and the development of financially viable models for delivering legal services that meet the needs of all Arkansans. **Your volunteer and financial support make this possible.** Thank you for your helping us represent both a hope—and a future—for Arkansans who would otherwise have nowhere to turn.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy R. Leeds".

Dean Stacy Leeds
University of Arkansas School of Law



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Hunter Schwartz".

Dean Michael Hunter Schwartz
University of Arkansas at Little
Rock School of Law

2014 JUSTICE PROJECTS

Developing Justice – New Consumer Protection Clinic

In 2014, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law launched a new clinical program in the area of consumer protection. The Consumer Protection Clinic is overseen by Professor Amy Pritchard, a former Legal Aid of Arkansas staff attorney. Clinic students assist clients who are facing foreclosure, eviction, housing instability, fraud, unfair or deceptive trade practices, and problems with credit reports and credit access. Students also gain exposure to a broad range of substantive housing and consumer law, as well as access to justice and professional responsibility issues.



In its inaugural year, ten clinical students assisted low-income Arkansans in avoiding predatory debt collectors, preventing foreclosures and evictions, and improving rental housing conditions. Clinical students collaborated with attorneys from both legal aid programs on individual cases and on systemic projects to increase protections for Arkansas tenants and other consumers.

Accessing Justice – Onsite Court Help for Pro Se Litigants



In 2011, a study from the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission indicated that 91% of Pulaski County cases involving domestic relations, consumer, or probate matters had at least one unrepresented party. In response to that study's findings, the Commission partnered with the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership and the Pulaski County Circuit Court to pilot a court-based self-help center called "CourtHelp," which provides self-represented court patrons with legal information and other services to aid them in getting their cases heard on the merits.

The CourtHelp office is located in the Pulaski County Circuit Courthouse in Room 200, and is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00AM until 1:00PM. **The office opened January 13, 2015, and has assisted more than 100 pro se litigants in its first three months of operation.**

Road to Justice – A Route to Redemption

By spending their spring break with Legal Aid, **eight law students helped more than 40 low-income Arkansans with their legal issues.** For the 5th Annual Road to Justice, law students traveled with Legal Aid of Arkansas staff attorneys to Osceola, West Memphis, Wynne and Forrest City to provide legal help to clients on the spot, primarily with criminal record expungements.

Since its inception four years ago, the Road to Justice has succeeded in taking legal help on the road. Law students from the University of Arkansas School of Law and University of Arkansas at Little Rock Bowen School of Law, Legal Aid staff, and volunteer attorneys have helped Arkansans with estate, debt collection, guardianship, housing, and more. The Road to Justice was funded in part by donations from the Student Bar Association at the University of Arkansas School of Law.

View more of our justice projects at www.arlegalservices.org/justiceprojects.



LEGAL AID IN ARKANSAS 2014 – FUNDING

The two Arkansas legal aid programs provide critical legal services to thousands of Arkansans every year. As 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, they provide free legal services to low-income individuals residing in the state of Arkansas in civil (non-criminal) cases. With limited financial resources and annual client caseloads consistently hovering near the 15,000 mark, our legal aid programs must stretch their dollars in innovative ways. The primary funding sources for legal aid in Arkansas include: Legal Services Corporation (LSC), grants and contracts, the Public Legal Aid Fund, Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA), donations from private bar attorneys and corporations, and donations from organizations and individuals. The following charts show the revenues and expenditures that are used to provide the services detailed on the previous page.

Revenue



4% of our funding came from **donations** by private bar attorneys and corporations.

9% of our funding came from the **Arkansas IOLTA Program**. Most of that amount represents distributions out of the \$2 million National Mortgage Settlement fund designated for the provision of services to assist clients affected by the housing crisis.

11% of funding came from the **Public Legal Aid Fund** established by the Arkansas Legislature in 2005. This fund distributes a percentage of circuit court filing and case reopening fees to legal aid.

12% of funding came from **grants and contracts**, including anti-domestic abuse funding, IRS, United Way, Parent Counsel, Equal Justice Works, AmeriCorps, juvenile and aging funding.

64% of funding came from the federal **Legal Services Corporation (LSC)**. LSC is a nonprofit entity established by Congress to fund free civil legal services.

Expenditures



17% **Support staff** who provide services to further the legal aid mission, including secretarial, business management, information technology, and executive leadership.

17% **Operational costs** for 14 offices, including rent, utilities, postage, telephone/technology, printing/copying, travel, and office equipment/maintenance.

66% **Attorney and paralegal salaries** and benefits comprise the single largest source of expense. These 64 individuals handle client cases in legal aid offices throughout the state.

Arkansas IOLTA Program Celebrates 30 Years

Created in 1985, the Arkansas IOLTA Program was established as a program permitting the collection of interest on lawyers' trust accounts to use for purposes approved by the Supreme Court, including **legal aid to the poor, student loans and scholarships, and improvement of the administration of justice**. Since its inception, the IOLTA Program has made grants **totaling more than \$10.5 million**. The program is administered by the **Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation**, which also coordinates an annual statewide **Campaign for Legal Aid**.

In addition to making individual contributions, attorneys who participate in the Arkansas IOLTA program can support access to the justice system by banking with a preferred bank, which waives fees and pays competitive interest rates on IOLTA accounts. **For a list of preferred and participating banks and our *Guidebook for Attorneys and Financial Institutions*, please visit the IOLTA Program website at www.arkansasjustice.org/iolta.**

LEGAL AID IN ARKANSAS 2014 – HOW WE HELP

Arkansas's rural communities face a looming crisis when it comes to access to essential legal services: **a dwindling and aging attorney population in the state's 25 most rural counties**. A policy brief entitled *Access to Justice in Rural Arkansas*, released jointly by the **Arkansas Access to Justice Commission** and **UC Davis** in early 2015, indicates that these counties average fewer than 0.44 practicing attorneys per 1,000 residents. Seven of these counties have no attorneys licensed this millennium, and one has no attorneys at all. That study revealed another surprising finding: **of the state's 6,855 resident, active, attorneys only 2,982 are currently in private practice**. These numbers represent a troubling and **growing rural justice gap** that Legal Aid is struggling to fill.

The following tables and narratives show the number of cases, case types, and the value of the critical pro bono support provided by Arkansas attorneys.

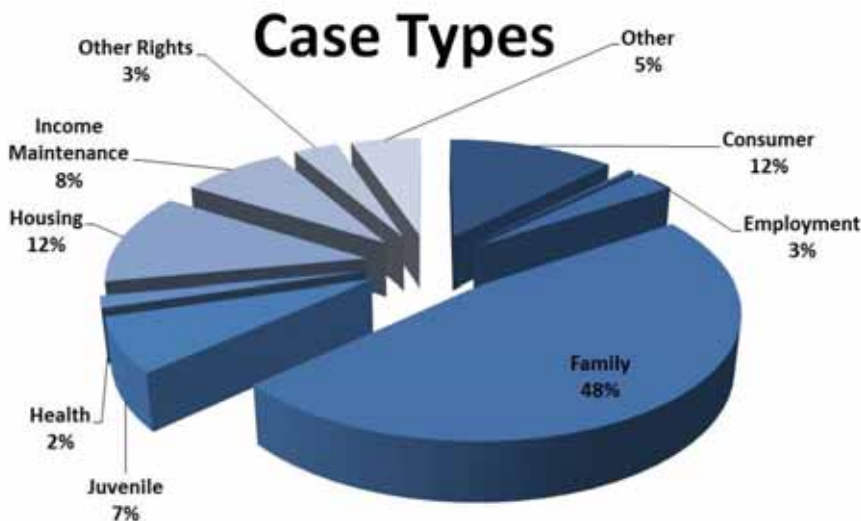
Client Numbers

- **750,491** legal aid eligible Arkansans
- **27,372** eligible clients **requested help**
- **12,709** client cases (*closed or pending*)
- **16,775** Arkansans **turned away** due to resource limitations
- **\$6.5 Million** attained for Arkansans as **client recovery and avoidance**
- **26,897** total Arkansans were helped (*all household members*)



Primary Areas of Practice

- **5,155** cases **assisting families** with domestic abuse, child protection, and other family law
- **1,337** **consumer** law cases (bankruptcy, debt collections, and other consumer law)
- **1,460** **health & housing** issues, including evictions, foreclosures, and Medicaid
- **770** juvenile cases for **children who were neglected or abused** (includes guardianships)
- **830** cases involving **SSI, SSDI**, or other income maintenance
- **1,287** cases involving **employment**, education, **individual rights**, and other civil legal matters



“[Rural] counties average fewer than 0.44 practicing attorneys per 1,000 residents.”

“Seven of these counties have no attorneys licensed this millennium, and one has no attorneys at all.”

Learn more at www.arkansasjustice.org/rural-access-policy-brief.

PRO BONO SUPPORT

- **572** private attorneys **handled a total of 867 pro bono cases**, and another **102 attorneys volunteered** for pro bono events
- **\$1,418,920** in **pro bono services** (in-kind value) was provided by Arkansas attorneys
- **\$288,294** in private donations (VOCALS, LAA, and the Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation)

PRO BONO ATTORNEYS OF THE YEAR

Tabitha Lee

Arkansas Legal Services Partnership Vanguard Award

Tabitha Lee has been awarded the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership "Vanguard Award" for 2014. This award, in its inaugural year, is given by the Partnership to an attorney in the state who best exemplifies not only a commitment to pro bono service, but an innovative and courageous spirit in bringing Arkansas closer to achieving equal access to justice for all. During 2014, Ms. Lee worked tirelessly to help low-income Arkansans with their legal problems as both an advocate for them and a partner and leader in every clinic and outreach event the partnership orchestrated. Ms. Lee's pioneering and generous spirit both embodies and inspired the Vanguard Award.



Tabitha Lee of Dermott, Arkansas, is a graduate of Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, & Arts, University of Arkansas (B.S. '09), UALR William H. Bowen School of Law (J.D. '13), and the Clinton School of Public Service (MPS '14). She serves as law clerk to the Honorable Leon Johnson in Pulaski County First Division Circuit Court as well as a community organizer in eastern Arkansas. She believes that every person is entitled to live with dignity.

Wade Williams

Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly Service Award

Legal Aid of Arkansas honors Wade Williams of Eureka Springs as the 2014 Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly Service Award. The Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly program is a division of Legal Aid of Arkansas that serves clients over the age of sixty. The award recognizes outstanding volunteerism and service to elderly residents. Williams donated over 51 pro bono hours primarily to the elderly because "he wanted to the opportunity to help others."



Williams has been practicing law since 1990. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Arkansas and received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Arkansas School of Law.

When asked what motivates him to volunteer his time with Legal Aid clients, Williams answered, "I have been blessed in my life and feel it is important to give back. Since I can't always repay those who bless me, I try to pass it on to others." Wade is married to Elizabeth Williams and they have 5 children between them: Lucinda Williams, Leslie Williams, Matthew Cole, Jackson Cole, and Henry Cole. Williams enjoys traveling and history. His firm, Thurman & Flanagan, is located in Eureka Springs.

Jim O'Hern

River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project Attorney of the Year

Jim O'Hern is the recipient of the 2014 "Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award" presented by the River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project. During 2014, as an attorney in private practice in Fort Smith, O'Hern devoted 118 hours of pro bono representation to low income clients in Sebastian County and Crawford County. Attorney O'Hern received his B.A. from the College of Charleston in 1975 and received his law degree from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1980.



Since 1991, Attorney O'Hern has been an active participant in the River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project. The River Valley Volunteer Project is co-sponsored by the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and the Sebastian and Crawford County Bar Associations. As a member of the Board of Directors for the Center for Arkansas Legal Services, O'Hern is also involved in focusing on the legal needs of low-income Arkansans.

O'Hern closed five cases in 2014. One of the cases involved an eighty-three year old client who wanted to obtain legal title to property located in Van Buren. The property had been owned by the client's grandparents, who died leaving five children. The five children died leaving sixteen children. O'Hern spent eighty-one hours on this case. Three of the closed cases involved parents seeking guardianships of disabled adult children and one step-parent adoption.

PRO BONO ATTORNEYS OF THE YEAR

Sandra Y. Harris

Jefferson County VOCALS Attorney of the Year

VOCALS of Jefferson County celebrates Sandra Y. Harris as their 2014 Pro Bono Attorney of the Year. Harris joined VOCALS in 1993, a year after graduating from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law, and has been a vital and outstanding pro bono advocate since. Harris has received multiple awards from VOCALS of Jefferson County throughout her tenure, most recently being awarded pro bono attorney of the year in 2010.

Sandra Harris graciously said of the award, "It is a special honor for me to receive the Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award. As a native of Jefferson County and Pine Bluff, it means a great deal to me to be able to provide representation to citizens who, otherwise, may have no access to legal service. Again, I am very humbled to have this award bestowed upon me, and I would also like to thank the Center for Arkansas Legal Service for the important work they do."



Edie Ervin

Medical-Legal Partnership Outstanding Attorney

Edie Ervin is recognized for her outstanding volunteerism for the Medical-Legal Partnership with Mid-Delta Health Systems, Inc., and Legal Aid of Arkansas. Ervin donated over 56 hours of pro bono service to medical-legal partnership clients during 2014. Her donation has a conservative value of \$11,200 to the community. Ervin graduated from Hendrix College in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She then attended the UALR Bowen School of Law, graduating first in her law school class. She started her legal career as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas the Honorable G. Thomas Eisele. Later, she joined Williams & Anderson as an associate, becoming a partner. In 2000, she returned to the Eastern District to clerk for the Honorable James M. Moody and then again for Judge Eisele. Ervin is now Of Counsel with Friday, Eldredge & Clark, LLP.



Ervin is an adjunct professor for the Trial Advocacy Workshop at the UALR Bowen School of Law. She has served on the Camp Aldersgate, Inc., Board of Directors for 5 years. When asked what motivates her to volunteer her time with the medical-legal partnership, Ervin said, "It is a great way to help increase access to the legal system for those who might otherwise be denied access. In the process, I usually receive as much or more than I give. Working with Legal Aid clients is humbling and rewarding."

Randel Miller

Equal Access to Justice Panel Outstanding Service Award

Randel Miller is being recognized with the Overall Outstanding Service Award for work done in 2014. The award, given each year by Legal Aid of Arkansas, a nonprofit corporation providing free legal services, recognizes an attorney who best personifies the ideals of volunteerism and professionalism in the 31 counties Legal Aid serves. Per Heidi Jamison, Pro Bono Coordinator, "Mr. Miller has been a wonderful volunteer for over ten years goes above and beyond when needed for his clients. This past year, he went multiple times to court for a client in Poinsett County who didn't show until the 4th time due to transportation problems and the client finally got her divorce."

Miller is a graduate of Marmaduke High School, Arkansas State University and the UALR Bowen School of Law. When asked why he chose the legal profession, Miller responded "I wanted to make a career of things that I felt mattered, that made a difference in people's lives. My career has never been about making money as much as it has been about making a difference. I enjoy helping other people, particularly those that cannot afford the services they truly need. It makes me feel good to give someone a level playing field." Miller is married to Michelle Miller. He has 4 children: Rachel Miller, Paige Nuckles, Dariane Nuckles and Rylee Miller. He enjoys martial arts and coaching his son in baseball, basketball and football. His firm is The Miller Law Firm, 1009 S. Main Street in Jonesboro, Arkansas.



PRO BONO ATTORNEYS OF THE YEAR

Kevin Odum

Pulaski County VOCALS Attorney of the Year

Kevin Odum has been a vital part of the VOCALS program for many years. He has contributed over 160 hours since joining VOCALS in 1998. In 2010, he began accepting referral cases. Over the past three years, Kevin has accepted over 35 cases. He has never refused a case and has been successful in winning most cases accepted. On several occasions, he has referred clients to CALS, and then accepted the client back as pro bono case.

Kevin Odum practices primarily in personal injury and social security law. He is a 1993 graduate of the Bowen School of Law. He is a member of the Pulaski County Bar Association, Arkansas Bar Association, and Arkansas Trial Lawyers Association. The VOCALS Attorney of the Year award is given each year to an attorney who has made a significant commitment to pro bono representation of low-income clients with civil cases in Pulaski County.



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"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO TURN ...!"

"I REMEMBER FEELING SO HELPLESS!"



REPRESENTING HOPE – CLIENT STORIES

Making an Impact

A single father and his two children sit down to dinner on a week night. He has recently been laid off—he hasn't found other work yet. Still, he sets the table, turns off the TV, and they bow their heads in prayer before their meager meal when there is suddenly a knock on the door. A police officer waits, arrest warrant in hand. Dad is late on the rent this month.

The threat of jail time, fines, and a criminal record is real for families who fall behind on their rent. Arkansas is the only state in America where failure to pay rent is a crime. For some Arkansans, however, the threat of being thrown in a modern day debtor's prison is gone.



In 2014, a single woman, impoverished, had rented from her landlord for over ten years. She couldn't afford much, and she didn't get much. Conditions in her apartment were so deteriorated that, finally, she fell through the floor. After her landlord refused to make repairs, she contacted code enforcement. The landlord responded by bringing charges under Arkansas' criminal eviction law ("Failure to Vacate"), alleging the woman owed \$20,000 in back rent. The Center for Arkansas Legal Services became involved and represented the woman in Little Rock District Court. After the client was found guilty in district court, the Center appealed to Pulaski County Circuit Court challenging the constitutionality of the Failure to Vacate Statute.

Judge Herbert Wright found the statute to be unconstitutional and dismissed the charges.

Based on the Judge's ruling, the Pulaski County Prosecutor's Office is no longer issuing warrants for failure to vacate. The change in the law has impacted thousands of renters in Pulaski County, and cascaded into similar rulings in the 1st and 2nd Judicial Circuits. These victories were achieved through the concerted efforts of a statewide housing taskforce. Stacy Fletcher and Dustin Duke, both from Center, defended the client in the case. Legal Aid of Arkansas attorney, Jason Auer, was co-counsel. VOCALS attorney, Shanice Johnson, was co-counsel at the district court level. Brandon Buskey of the ACLU provided invaluable guidance and research.

Struggle and Hope

A single mother trapped in an abusive relationship acted in her daughter's best interest and consented to a permanent guardianship order. Miraculously, after a year of counseling and parenting classes, the mother broke free from her cycle of abuse. Eager to reunite her family and pass on the strength she found, the mother filed a petition to remove the guardianship. Unfortunately, because guardianships by consent are not recognized under Arkansas's guardianship statutes, the standard for removal is burdensome, which—as applied—resulted in the Court's entry of a directed verdict against the mother. However, due to VOCALS attorney Abtin Mehdizadegan's thoroughness and countless hours preparing the case and preserving the appellate record, the Center for Arkansas Legal Services had a strong case for appeal.



That appeal is still pending. One family remains broken. But, thanks to the incredible dedication of a mother, a pro bono attorney, and the Center's staff, hundreds of families across the state of Arkansas have renewed hope that they may one day be reunited.

VOCALS Pro Bono Attorney: *Abtin Mehdizadegan, Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus, P.C.*

REPRESENTING HOPE – CLIENT STORIES

Serving Families

A dedicated grandmother reached out to the Center for Arkansas Legal Services for help getting a guardianship over her grandchildren. She raised her two grandchildren for most of their lives because their parents were struggling with drugs. Although the client had cared for the children for years, the client had a hard time obtaining medical care for one of the children because she was not an official guardian. With the help of dedicated VOCALS attorney George R. Wise, Jr., the client was finally able to get a guardianship over both of her grandchildren.

VOCALS Pro Bono Attorney: *George R. Wise, Jr., Brad Hendricks Law Firm*



Giving Arkansans a Second Chance

Many Arkansans have criminal records that seriously limit their professional opportunities, but with a little legal help, they can often seal these records and move on with their lives. In October 2014, a dedicated group of lawyers, other legal professionals, and law students gathered in North Little Rock to assist 118 Arkansans with sealing their criminal records. One client was able to obtain a job with the state government after a pro bono attorney helped the client seal his criminal record at the event. Another client sealed a criminal charge from an incident in which an abusive ex-partner coerced her into shoplifting. Several members of the W. Harold Flowers Law Society were instrumental in the events success.

W. Harold Flowers Law Society: *Cory Childs, President*



Protecting Tenants

A single mother of two small children turned to Legal Aid of Arkansas for help after her property manager refused to recertify her qualification for project based Section 8 voucher even though she qualified. The property manager demanded an additional \$500.00 per month, and, when the client could not pay the new rent, changed her locks and kept her possessions. Staff Attorney Jason Auer immediately commenced litigation and a TRO was issued allowing client back into her home. As a result of a negotiated settlement client was awarded \$1,000.00 for being removed from her home and three other clients were recertified by the project manager as well.

Legal Aid of Arkansas: *Jason Auer, Staff Attorney*



Keeping Them Honest

A single woman was only able to work part-time because she is the caregiver for her dying father. She ran into debt problems and was sued by a debt collection company. The woman, not understanding the legal papers, never filed an answer. The debt collection company obtained a default judgment and a writ of garnishment was issued against her bank account. She turned to the Center for Arkansas Legal Services for help. After investigating the case, Center attorney Cecille Doan discovered that the debt collection company had violated the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. Cecille worked with a VOCALS attorney to bring a Fair Debt Collection Practices Act claim on behalf of the client in federal. The debt collection company settled. All of the client's debts were forgiven and she received an additional \$2,000 in statutory damages.

Center for Arkansas Legal Services: *Cecille Doan, Staff Attorney*



More client stories are available on the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership website at www.arlegalservices.org/clientstories.

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