The COVID-19 pandemic upended our world and inflicted enormous suffering on the people we’re charged to serve. Our clients and staff were presented with unique challenges. We learned to navigate a new normal and carry forward with our lives as best as we could. Loved ones were lost, hidden strength was mustered, resilience ruled the day, and together we pushed toward the light at the end of the tunnel.

The way Legal Aid responded to the pandemic was the bright star of my 30 years here. The courage shown by our staff and clients in meeting and conquering adversity has overwhelmed me with pride. Pride in the spirit of our diverse staff and clients. Pride in outcomes that maintain dignity and advance justice. Pride in all of us for pushing aside sometimes overwhelming dismay to advocate for and achieve a better world to live in.

The staff in our Domestic Justice group helped 1,804 survivors of domestic violence and 2,403 children in their care achieve safety and security in their lives. This included 427 orders being entered to protect survivors from their abuser.

Our Housing group saw a surge of request for assistance with Landlord/Tenant and Fair Housing cases. We delayed or prevented hundreds of evictions during a time of great vulnerability and addressed an increased volume of systemic housing discrimination issues.

There were several pandemic related issues addressed by our Economic Justice group, including access to desperately needed unemployment and SNAP benefits. At the same time, the group continued to seek good health and a dignified lifestyle for our clients through ongoing Medicaid litigation.

Our Consumer group helped seal hundreds of criminal records, improving employment and housing opportunities, and challenged systemic and predatory practices throughout the program that adversely impact the communities we serve.

Our Low-Income Taxpayers clinic had a banner year, serving a record number of clients and putting more than a million dollars cash in their pockets. Our Beyond Opioids project kicked off in September and has already served hundreds of clients, helping make families stronger and recovery a reality by addressing civil legal needs of those impacted by Opioid/Substance Use Disorder.

Facing the gravest threat to well-being in a generation, we helped almost 7,000 clients with an impact on over 19,000 household members, the most clients assisted in several years. Many of our cases had a larger impact in the client community on the state and national level. We will continue working to make a more just world, a goal made all the more imperative by the pandemic’s intensification of poverty and inequality.

Through the selfless work and dedication of our staff, and with the support of the community, we continue to be one of the leading public interest law firms in the country. Thank you for everything you do to help us achieve our mission, make our communities stronger, and make the lives of those we serve more fulfilling and productive.

With appreciation,

Lee Richardson, Executive Director
71% of low-income households experienced at least 1 civil legal problem. [Access to Justice, 2019]

There is one legal aid attorney for every 10,253 eligible Arkansans.

In 2020, there has been a 5.9% decrease of active attorneys in Arkansas. [National Lawyer Population Survey]

1 in 4 Arkansans qualify for civil legal aid. [American Community Survey, 2019]

86% of civil legal problems report receiving inadequate or no legal help. [Access to Justice, 2019]

Arkansas has the fewest attorneys per capita in the country with one attorney per every 426 Arkansas residents. [American Bar Association. 2020]
Arkansas started its first legal services program in 1965 — the Legal Aid Bureau of Pulaski County. Since then there have been multiple mergers that led to the programs we have today.

Legal Aid of Arkansas was created by the merger of Legal Services of Northeast Arkansas, Ozark Legal Services and East Arkansas Legal Services in January of 2002.

At the same time, the Center for Arkansas Legal Services merged with Western Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Services of Arkansas. These two public interest law firms now provide civil legal aid to all 75 counties in Arkansas.

In 2003, the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission formed after the Arkansas Bar Association House of Delegates and the Access to Justice Working Group petitioned the Arkansas Supreme Court to create the commission.

The Arkansas Access to Justice Commission and The Center for Arkansas Legal Services work together with Legal Aid of Arkansas to further pursue the mission of championing equal access to justice for all.
Legal Aid of Arkansas is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that provides **free legal services** to low-income individuals residing in the state of Arkansas in civil (non-criminal) cases.

Legal Aid has offices in **9 locations and serves 31 of the 75 counties** in Arkansas.

The **mission** of Legal Aid of Arkansas is to champion equal justice for low-income individuals and communities and to remedy the conditions that burden and marginalize them.

Our **vision** is to improve the lives of low-income Arkansans by championing equal access to justice for all regardless of economic or social circumstances.
ALTHOUGH, MANY THINGS HAVE CHANGED IN THE PAST YEAR, ONE THING THAT SEEMS TO REMAIN CONSTANT IS A COMMON DESIRE TO DO SOMETHING – ANYTHING – TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Greneda Johnson, Pro Bono Director
6,971 cases closed impacting 19,028 people including 8,531 children.

Ranging from:

- **Family**: 3,128 cases
- **Housing**: 1,061 cases
- **Consumer**: 692 cases
- **Individual Rights**: 414 cases
- **Employment**: 379 cases
- **Juvenile**: 338 cases
- **Income Maintenance**: 305 cases
- **Health**: 246 cases
- **Education**: 36 cases
The Domestic Justice workgroup helps with obtaining and enforcing orders of protection and a variety of family law issues, including divorces and child custody cases, where there is an immediate or ongoing risk of harm to the child.

The Consumer Protection workgroup focuses on asset, income, and resource protection. It protects consumers from unfair trade and debt collection practices. It files petitions to seal criminal records to remove barriers to employment and housing.

The Housing workgroup fights housing discrimination under a variety of federal, state, and local laws. It defends tenants facing civil eviction suits and homeowners facing foreclosure suits.

The Economic Justice workgroup protects rights related to public benefit programs (Medicaid, SNAP, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security), special education services, and employment, including the enforcement of laws outlawing discrimination and wage theft.
I will not reject, from any consideration personal to myself, the cause of the impoverished, the defenseless, or the oppressed.

I will endeavor always to advance the cause of justice....

Arkansas Attorney's Oath
Ms. Jones*, a 69 year old women with various health conditions that made her unable to meet all of her care needs at home, had been previously receiving in-home care through the ARChoices Medicaid program. Based on a new computer-based assessment system, DHS terminated her from the program. Ms. Jones contacted Legal Aid of Arkansas for help and met with Kevin De Liban, a staff attorney. **Through the assistance of Kevin, she was able to keep her ARChoices Medicaid care to help her with tasks like using the bathroom, getting around, having food to eat, and keeping her house clean.**

Ms. Stone* and her boyfriend needed a larger car to safely transport their three children. After deciding on their new vehicle, the contract was inflated by $3,000 at the time of signing. Not shortly after purchasing the car, it broke down on the side of road, leaving Ms. Stone and her family without transportation. The car company refused to fix the new car without additional payments, and then proceeded to sue the family when they withheld payment. **Susan Purtle, a staff attorney from Legal Aid of Arkansas stepped in to represent Ms. Stone and was able to dismiss the car companies complaint, saving Ms. Stone and her family $12,000 she would have owed if a judgment was entered.**
After a tragic accident, Ms. Summers* niece had passed away, leaving behind her 3 year old daughter, Clare*. There was nobody else available or interested in obtaining guardianship of Clare, so Ms. Summers took action. She called Legal Aid of Arkansas and received assistance from Anaicka Ortiz-Reed, a staff attorney, to attain temporary guardianship of Clare while a registry searched for a father. The temporary guardianship allowed Ms. Summers to add Clare to her HUD housing so Clare could immediately settle in. After the registry search was completed and no father was found, Ms. Summers was granted permanent guardianship.

A Marshallese tenant contacted Legal Aid because his family was facing immediate eviction. Mr. John* had lost his job due to COVID-19 and was forced to use rent money to pay for groceries for his family. Knowing this was a critical situation, Legal Aid staff worked hard to preserve the family’s housing. Legal Aid determined that the tenant’s landlord had sued in violation of the CARES Act as the property was subject to a federally backed mortgage. Legal Aid attorney, Jason Auer, was successful in getting the case dismissed and helping the family regain their stability.

*Clients names have been changed to respect their privacy and safety.
Despite these difficult times, Legal Aid of Arkansas attorneys have met the challenge to provide legal assistance during the pandemic.
These core areas reflect Legal Aid's strategic focus to support families; preserve homes; maintain economic stability; ensure safety, stability, and health; and to identify and address the needs of vulnerable populations.
386 pro bono cases closed across 43 counties

Through Medical Legal Partnerships, pro bono cases go beyond Legal Aid of Arkansas Service Area.
We had countless attorneys and law students reach out to the Pro Bono team to offer help in any way that they could, whether it was help with eviction defense to estate planning.

Greneda Johnson, Pro Bono Director

Pro Bono Events

Super Saturday Estate Planning Clinics

Served
15 clients
Produced
44 documents
Pro Bono Volunteers
9 attorneys
2 law students

Single Parent Scholarship of Benton County

Served
24 clients
Produced
82 documents
Pro Bono Volunteers
11 attorneys
9 law students

Inaugural Virtual Expungement Clinic

Served
30 clients
Produced
136 documents
Pro Bono Volunteers
10 attorneys
8 law students

Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

Fuller Bumpers

Fuller Bumpers has been advocating for families and individuals for over 12 years! His donation of 110 hours helped those who otherwise would not have had access to legal services.
BEYOND OPIOIDS

Beyond Opioids is a new justice project that provides free civil legal services to eligible clients impacted by the opioid crisis and other substance use disorders in Arkansas.

Beyond Opioids is a consortium of prevention, treatment, and recovery service providers led by the two legal aid programs in Arkansas: Center for Arkansas Legal Services (CALS) and Legal Aid of Arkansas (Legal Aid).

Since September 2020, 523 substance use disorder intakes have come in, this is 13.6% of total intake cases. 81% of total cases have been Domestic Justice focused, with 7.5% of total cases focused on housing.

For more information, visit: www.beyondopioids.org
LOW INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC

The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic ensures the fairness and integrity of the tax system for taxpayers who are low income or speak English as a second language.

They provide representation, resources and education on rights, and they actively advocate and identify issues that may be unjustly facing low-income Arkansans within the IRS tax system.

FAIR HOUSING PROJECT

The Fair Housing Project of Legal Aid of Arkansas works to eliminate housing discrimination and to ensure equal housing opportunity for all people through education, outreach, public policy initiatives, advocacy, and enforcement.

Conducted 55 fair housing tests

Provided representation in state or federal courts on 8 cases

If you believe you have been discriminated against, please call the fair housing helpline at 1-870-338-9834.
MEDICAL LEGAL PARTNERSHIPS

Legal Aid of Arkansas is engaged in Medical-Legal Partnerships (MLP) throughout Arkansas with a variety of health care providers. MLP's team lawyers and paralegals with health care teams in medical settings to detect, address and prevent health-harming social conditions for people and communities. The goal is for attorneys and medical staff to work together to achieve lasting positive health outcomes for low-income patients and clients.

- Mid-Delta Health Systems and Friday, Eldridge & Clark
- Arkansas Children's Hospital
- Mid-South Health Systems

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Legal Aid of Arkansas works to mitigate Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) by prioritizing cases where households have children under 5 years old.

Legal Aid of Arkansas can help prevent stress in a child's life from causing serious physical, mental and emotional issues by helping with Domestic Violence, Guardianship/Custody, Housing, Education, and Benefits cases.
**Revenue**

$4.35 million

- **Legal Services Corporation**: 43.2%
- **Grants & Contracts**: 23.4%
- **Federal Funds**: 11.9%
- **State Funds**: 10.2%
- **Access to Justice Foundation**: 8.7%
- **Private Donations**: 2.6%
Expenditures

$3.76 million

- Attorney/Paralegal Expenditures: 75%
- Operation Expenditures: 13%
- Administrative Staff Expenditures: 12%
A lack of resources is the number one reason Arkansans get turned away at Legal Aid of Arkansas. **Through your donations, you can cover what it costs for legal aid to represent a domestic violence victim, a family struggling to pay their bills, or a child in need of a stable home.**

You can make your one-time or monthly gift online today at: [https://arlegalaid.org/donation-landing-page/donate-landing.html](https://arlegalaid.org/donation-landing-page/donate-landing.html)

Providing pro bono services to people of limited means can mean the difference between justice for some and justice for all. **Pro bono service is one of the most rewarding experiences in an attorney’s career.**

You can register to become a pro-bono volunteer here: [https://arlegalaid.org/how-to-help/volunteer.html](https://arlegalaid.org/how-to-help/volunteer.html)
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*current board as of May, 2021*

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Office Locations:
- Harrison
- Helena - West Helena
- Jonesboro
- Little Rock -
- AR Children's Hospital MLP
- Little Rock - Fair Housing Office

Office Locations:
- Newport
- Springdale
- Rogers
- West Memphis
- El Dorado
- Fort Smith
- Hot Springs
- Little Rock
- Pine Bluff
- Russellville
WEBSITES & CONTACT INFORMATION

www.arlegalaid.org

Helpline: 1-800-952-9243

Office: 1-870-972-9224

Facebook.com/arlegalaid
Facebook.com/LowIncomeTaxpayerClinic
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