



ANNUAL REPORT

2020

LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTH FLORIDA



MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

PIVOT. VIRTUAL. ZOOM. REMOTE. All words that defined the work environment for Legal Services of North Florida in 2020. For the low-income and vulnerable who we serve, words like **ACCESS, INTERNET, UNEMPLOYMENT, EVICTION, HUNGER** defined their surroundings. We spoke to more victims of domestic violence who saw no safe way to leave their abuser; more families with children trying to make the ends to an ever-shortening string meet, with constant threats of eviction or foreclosure hanging over their shoulders. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone an even-brighter light on the disparities between those with financial stability, those on the cusp of poverty, and those in poverty or facing unsafe situations.

The Legal Services of North Florida team responded with agility and persistence. Within one week, our team moved to remote work, while maintaining limited staff in the office to meet with those who came, often facing emergencies, to our offices.

We developed enhanced tools to communicate with existing clients and to educate those in the community about their rights as tenants, homeowners, employees, students, taxpayers, and many others. We coordinated responses with the Courts, the local voluntary bar associations, the Florida Bar committees, our human services partners, and our medical providers. The cracks that our most vulnerable neighbors could fall through grew in size in 2020.

LSNF built new bridges and safety nets to help those with increased needs in these trying times.

As we close out 2020, we look back on the structures we built and know that many will need to continue – both because they remain necessary and because they help us to better serve all of those in need.

For LSNF, the words that define 2020 will be **TEAMWORK, INNOVATION, DETERMINATION, SERVICE**, and – as always – **HOPE. JUSTICE.FOR ALL.**

YVONNE WHITEHEAD

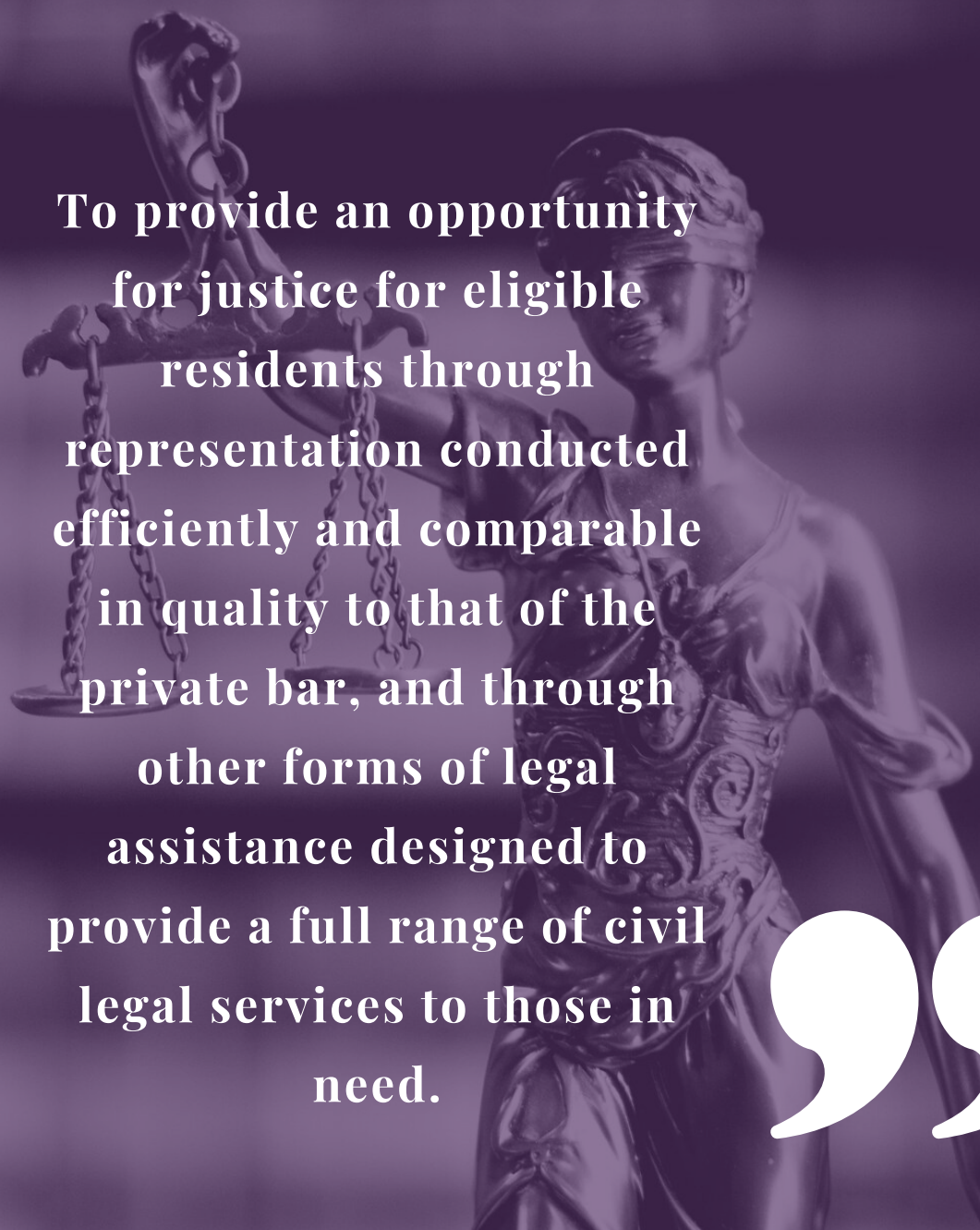
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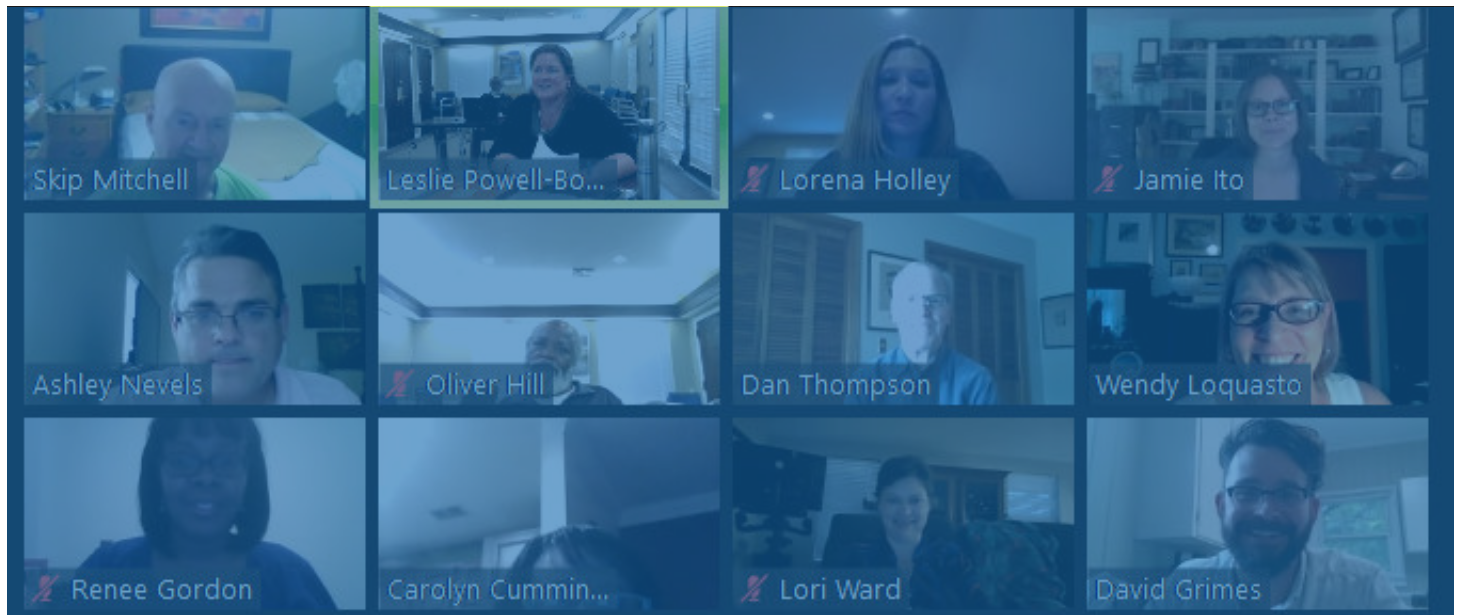
OUR MISSION

The mission of Legal Services of North Florida is:



To provide an opportunity
for justice for eligible
residents through
representation conducted
efficiently and comparable
in quality to that of the
private bar, and through
other forms of legal
assistance designed to
provide a full range of civil
legal services to those in
need.





LSNF BOARD & STAFF

LSNF is guided by a 21-member Board of Directors,

Seven of whom represent low-income client groups or are low-income clients. The remaining members include an accountant and volunteer attorneys appointed by local voluntary bar associations and the Florida State University College of Law.

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CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

RAY lost his job early on during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of lost wages, he got behind in his rent, even though he had never had an issue with rent before. Ray even had a verbal lease agreement going back a decade with his landlord. After applying to the local rental assistance program, Ray let his landlord know he submitted an application, but he was still met with a notice to vacate. Ray found LSNF with days left to respond. LSNF moved quickly and advocated successfully to keep Ray in his home, keeping him from becoming homeless.



WHO DO WE SERVE?

Clients are normally limited to an adjusted income of 125% of the federal poverty guidelines, with several of our grant sources having other income guidelines. All cases must be civil in nature and adhere to our priorities.

1867

Cases Handled
Related to COVID-19

6763

Cases Handled in 2020



HELP PROVIDED

LSNF serves thousands of people each year across 16 counties.

Each of our 5 offices manages hundreds of cases at a time, ensuring eligible clients receive professional and adequate legal assistance.

OF LSNF'S CLIENTS

75% were women



\$1,682,897

in one-time benefits
awarded to clients

\$1,699,620

in annual benefits
for our clients

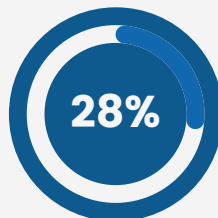


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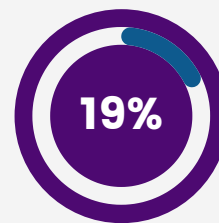
families stay in their homes
by defending unlawful evictions, negotiating
reasonable terms, and providing legal
counsel.

542

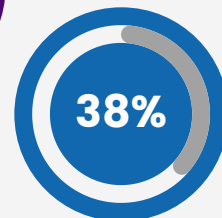
wills & advanced directives
were prepared for clients.



CLIENTS
Had cases related
to COVID-19



CLIENTS
Had eviction
cases



CLIENTS
Had family law
cases

ADDITIONAL LEGAL SOLUTIONS PROVIDED

- ✓ Provided specialized service to veterans experiencing homelessness.
- ✓ Obtained financial assistance for residents of public housing.
- ✓ Resolved tax controversies for low-income taxpayers.
- ✓ Recovered social security benefits for clients with disabilities.
- ✓ Represented children in the foster care system.
- ✓ Helped victims of domestic violence or sexual violence or human trafficking find safety away from their abusers.

PRO BONO

ATTORNEYS & AWARDS

The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award Recipients represent members of the legal community across the entire state that are dedicated to their local communities and give their time to helping bridge the gap to justice by providing access to the courts through their pro bono work. Each year, the Florida Bar recognizes 21 lawyers for their pro bono services throughout the year. After a rigorous panel process, these attorneys are chosen. LSNF proudly nominates attorneys in our service area. The following deserving recipients received a Pro Bono Service Award in 2020:



**SHELLEY
GUY
REYNOLDS**
1ST JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT



**ROBERT G.
CHURCHILL,
JR.**
2ND JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT



**LADRAY
BRANDAN
GILBERT**
14TH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT



**NICHOLAS
JOSEPH
YOUTZ**
14TH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT



PRO BONO RECOGNITION

Law Day Celebration

Mitigating COVID-19 meant changing how people joined events during 2020 and LSNF was excited to find a way to still bring Law Day Celebration 2020 to the Second Judicial Circuit. Awards were presented for professional and judicial excellence to the following individuals:

**The Richard W. Ervin
Equal Justice Award Winner**
The Honorable Justice Major B. Harding

**The Parks & Crump,
Thurgood Marshall Award
for Judicial Excellence Winner**
The Honorable Judge Francis J. Allman

**Recognition of the 2020 Florida Bar
President's Pro Bono Service Award
for the 2nd Judicial Circuit**
Robert G. Churchill, Jr.

**FSU College of Law
Blaise N. Gamba Outstanding Pro Bono
Service, Law Student Award Winner**
Kathryn Mesa

Keynote speaker Martha Barnett, retired partner at Holland & Knight LLC and former President of the American Bar Association, spoke on the Law Day 2020 theme "100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment". This event was viewed by thousands, across multiple platforms online. The event provided recognition, custom videos, and heartfelt gratitude throughout.

LSNF works closely with private attorneys throughout our 16-county service area to give legal assistance to low-income and vulnerable individuals. Through the Private Attorney Involvement Program (PAI), this cooperation takes several forms including coordinating volunteer attorney resources of time and/or financial support.



PRO BONO ENGAGEMENT

Over 100 pro bono attorneys helped LSNF serve clients in need across the Florida Panhandle. Their service provided incredible resources for low income and vulnerable populations that otherwise would not have had access to our courts.

1,529

Attorneys gave over 1,500 hours of service to low income individuals across North Florida.

824

PAI attorneys served 824 clients with a total of 1,937 household members in 2020.

\$391,700

LSNF Pro Bono attorneys gave the equivalent of \$391,700 worth of legal services through their time.

PRO BONO CELEBRATION WEEK

LSNF continued to recognize pro bono attorneys during Pro Bono Celebration through a virtual event that featured The Florida Bar President, Dori Foster-Morales, Esq. as the 2020 keynote speaker. This event aired on October 20 and brought in attendees from across the First and Fourteenth Judicial Circuits, recognizing over 100 volunteers who have served LSNF. These volunteers were mailed a challenge coin in recognition for their service and encouraged to share, with LSNF and their broader community, why they support pro bono and volunteer service.



**THE FLORIDA BAR PRESIDENT
DORI FOSTER-MORALES, ESQ**



JAZZ FOR JUSTICE

Jazz for Justice 2020 was no stranger to the challenges COVID-19 presented to all in-person events. Thankfully, with the incredible support and partnership of WUWF in Pensacola, LSNF's annual Jazz for Justice continued on with a virtual showcase of local and regional talent on November 14, 2020.

Headlining the event was national recording artist Flow Tribe, along with Al Martin & Michael J. McCartan, Big Daddy & Red Hot Java, David Paul Zimmer, Dirty Foot String Band, Ellen Vinson & Bobby van Deusen, Kathy Lyon, The Ladies Of (feat. James Hall), and Whiskey & Water.

Continuing this tradition was important and in doing so, Jazz for Justice reached not only listeners at WUWF and online across multiple platforms, but also Cox Channel 4 ECTV Channel 1004, Spectrum Channel 98, Mediacom Channel 98, ATT&T U-Verse Channel 99 and WUWF digital platforms.

Dancing with the Stars

While Dancing with the Stars has traditionally been in December, LSNF pushed this event back 2 months in an effort to ensure safety and proper planning through the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2020's DWTS wasn't in 2020 but wasn't quite 2021, we decided to name this hybrid event Dancing with the Stars 2020-ish!

This event will land on February 25, 2021 and look a little different than previous years with attendees socially distanced in person, as well as online viewers! Each celebrity dancer has signed on to support LSNF, excited to bring some of the fervor of DWTS to a virtual and in-person crowd.

Dancing with the Stars 2020-ish Dancers

Akin Akinyemi



Kimmy Hogan



Rick Minor



Heather Telfer



Suzanne Van Wyk



INVESTING IN LSNF

Leave a lasting legacy by naming LSNF as a beneficiary in your will.

Sustain LSNF's services well into the future by helping our endowment grow.

Pledge or give \$5,000 or more to LSNF and you can become a Founder of Justice.

Members of The Florida Bar can meet their pro bono goal by contributing to LSNF.

Sponsor our fundraising events, like Jazz for Justice or Dancing with the Stars Tallahassee, throughout the year.

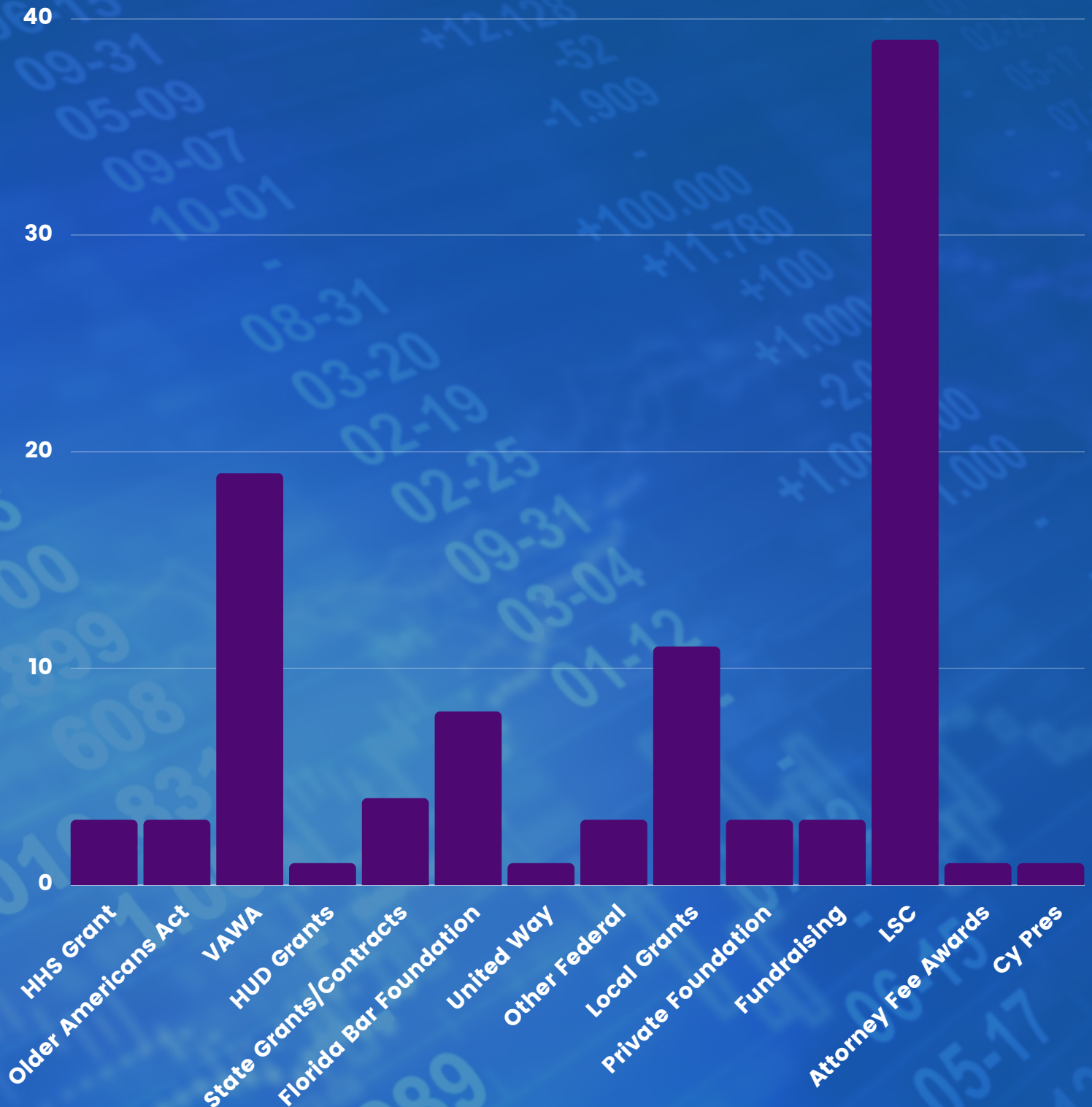
Attorneys and judges can consider designating Cy Pres Funds to LSNF.

Become a sustaining donor through LSNF's monthly giving opportunities.

\$133,281

Raised during the
Partners in Service
Campaign

2020 REVENUE



FUNDING PARTNERS

LSNF is grateful to work alongside so many local, state and national governmental entities,

along with agencies across the Florida Panhandle who have embraced our mission of justice by supporting our work. On behalf of all those we serve we, LSNF would like to thank our funding partners.

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\$500+

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\$250+

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\$100+

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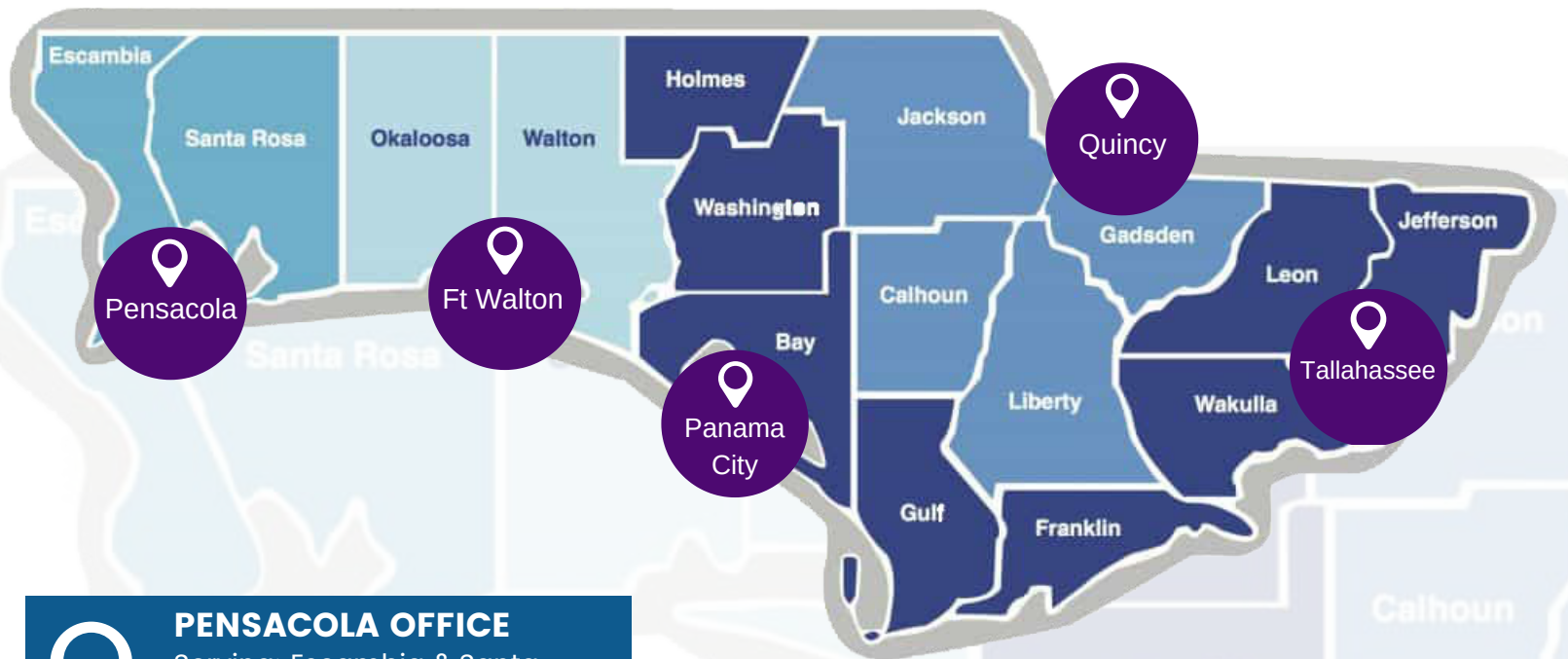
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There is no higher calling for members of the Bar than to serve those who fall in the justice gap in our community and the state as a whole.

Suzanne Van Wyk
Administrative Law Judge

These law firms and individuals support Legal Services of North Florida by committing donations of \$350 per year as part of a partnership with The Florida Bar. Find out more about this program and see who else is part of this prestigious campaign by clicking below:

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