



Legal Services
of NORTH FLORIDA
HOPE. JUSTICE. FOR ALL.

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

☎ 850-385-9007

🌐 www.LSNF.org

Serving the Florida Panhandle

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OUR LEADERSHIP

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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MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

2023 saw Legal Services of North Florida ready to tackle the challenges of high inflation, increasing rents, and lack of affordable housing. In our first full year out of the pandemic, these challenges brought a heightened need for civil legal assistance, with an increase in families requesting civil legal help and facing increasingly tough choices between food, housing, and utilities.

In early 2023, Legal Services of North Florida leadership established a new strategic plan, including redefining our mission, vision, core values, and goals. This renewed commitment to “A Clear Pathway to Justice for Everyone in North Florida” is reflected in this report and the work engaged in by Legal Services of North Florida. The adoption of core values – to engage in work that is Impactful, to ensure the highest level of Professionalism, to show Compassion and respect for all, to remain Tenacious in our service, and to remain linked and Connected to our communities – brought focus to our mission and goals. Those goals – Housing Advocacy, Community Awareness and Partnerships, Innovations in Client Services, Funding/Resource Development, and People and Process – add to the organizational strength of Legal Services of North Florida and our ability to serve our communities. As we implement our plan, we see greater efficiencies and better client case outcomes as a result.

Our commitment to utilizing our resources strategically and resiliently helps Legal Services of North Florida better serve our communities. For so many of our clients, the results of their legal matters determine whether they can remain housed, employed, safe, and with their children achieving in school.

Our service to victims of interpersonal violence remains a key part of our work, as we work with survivors to overcome and separate themselves from abuse. We continue to see an increase in requests for help related to housing – both for renters and homeowners – as housing shortages and prices increase. As a result, we expanded our efforts to help families clear titles to their family homes. This Heirs’ Property work keeps families housed while protecting the generational wealth and investment in those homes. Hurricane Idalia spun through the eastern part of our service area in August, causing significant damage to homes and businesses, which continue to recover. Legal Services of North Florida was immediately on the ground serving those most impacted by the storm, and we continue to use our expertise in disaster response and recovery to help those still being impacted by earlier Hurricanes Sally and Michael. We also continue to see new families in need of help moving to North Florida due to weather impacts in other parts of the country.

Our leadership, including our Board of Directors and Staff Directors, work tirelessly to ensure the strength of our organization, much as our legal staff work to improve the lives of those in need. Our Board identified ways to improve the value of our investments and ensure strong and affirmative stewardship of the funds given to us by those who share our mission. We remain grateful to these donors, as well as the volunteers, grantors, and others who share our commitment to a clear path to justice for everyone in North Florida. Thank you for the support, engagement, and care toward our mission. To have faith in the rule of law, it must be accessible. Your support helps Legal Services of North Florida make that a reality for so many.

LESLIE POWELL-BOUDREAUX

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JAMIE ITO

BOARD PRESIDENT

8,283

Cases Handled
in 2023

19,746

Children & Adults Assisted

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.

Helped

1,739

families stay in their
homes.

41%

Cases directly helped
children.

Provided housing advice
to

2,276

people.

HELP PROVIDED

LSNF serves thousands of people each year across 16 counties.

Each of our 5 primary locations manage hundreds of cases at a time, ensuring eligible clients receive professional and quality legal assistance.

OF LSNF'S CLIENTS

73%
were
women



\$7,100,331

in one-time benefits
awarded to clients

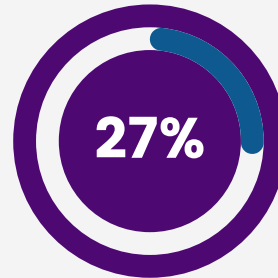
\$7,646,894

in annualized benefits
for our clients



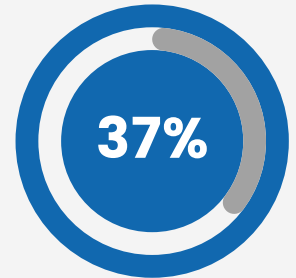
2,105

Senior Residents
over the age of 60 were
provided full
representation by LSNF
staff.



CASES

Supported the stability of
client housing



CASES

Ensured the safety and
stability of client family
relationships

ADDITIONAL LEGAL SOLUTIONS PROVIDED

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



CLIENT TESTIMONIAL



TANYA recently went through a divorce that wasn't easy, especially with the history of domestic violence. She and her ex-husband have a child with significant special needs, so there was a lot to figure out. They managed to work things out in mediation and agreed on everything. They had already split their belongings and debts, so that was off the table. When it came to their child, they decided to share parenting responsibilities. Since going back to her former name, Tammy felt like she was starting fresh. Tammy represents the many women who LSNF helps to navigate the complicated legal system.

PRO BONO RECOGNITION

Law Day Celebration

Law Day Celebration 2023 honored legal professionals in the Second Judicial Circuit who, together, dedicated thousands of hours to legal aid organizations in Florida's Big Bend. These individuals include professionals, firm partners, judges, students, and government attorneys. LSNF, alongside co-hosts and partners Legal Aid Foundation of Tallahassee and the Florida State University's College of Law engaged the local community in a spirited debate by leaders from the local Voluntary Bar Associations.

The debate was moderated by Florida Supreme Court Justice John D. Couriel and included participating Voluntary Bar Associations and their representatives:

FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION

Jeffrey J. Grosholz, Esq., Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

Michael MacNamara, Esq., Public Defender for the Second Judicial Circuit

FLORIDA GOVERNMENT BAR ASSOCIATION

Megan Silver, Esq., Division of Administrative Hearings

TALLAHASSEE BAR ASSOCIATION

Erin Tilton, Esq., Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A.

TALLAHASSEE BARRISTERS ASSOCIATION

Louis Baptiste, Esq., Webster + Baptiste Attorneys At Law PLLC

TALLAHASSEE WOMEN LAWYERS

Winifred Acosta, Esq., U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Florida



**The Honorable Anthony Miller
Joy Aukema Taps Children's
Advocate Award**



**The Honorable Monique
Richardson
Parks & Crump Thurgood
Marshall Award**



**Second Judicial Circuit Public
Defender, Jessica Yeary, Esq.
Ervin Equal Justice Award**



**Kortney Lightfoot
Blaise N. Gamba Award**



PRO BONO RECOGNITION

Pro Bono Celebration

LSNF honored legal professionals throughout the First Judicial Circuit at the Annual Pro Bono celebration on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at the Pensacola Museum of Commerce. One of the many highlights of the evening was the keynote address by April Frazier Camara, President and CEO of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA).

Ms. Camara, a distinguished legal professional, brings decades of experience to her role. Ms. Camara's leadership within NLADA has been instrumental in advancing the cause of justice. Her petition to those attending the 2023 Pro Bono Celebration was that of Hope and Perseverance.

HOPE

PERSEVERANCE

April Frazier Camara, President and
CEO of the National Legal Aid and
Defender Association

PRO BONO RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

Sixty-three pro bono attorneys served LSNF 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.



\$919,594

LSNF Pro Bono attorneys gave the equivalent of \$603,255 in legal services through their time.

2,452

Attorneys gave over 2,000 hours of service to low income individuals across North Florida.



HUNDREDS

...of clients were served by pro bono attorneys.



JENNIFER GUTAI COMELLA
1st Judicial Circuit



KEVIN A. FORSTHOEFEL
2nd Judicial Circuit



CLARK T. RODGERS, JR.
14th Judicial Circuit

The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award Recipients

...represent members of the legal community across the entire state who 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.

JAZZ FOR JUSTICE

We were thrilled to return Jazz for Justice to downtown Pensacola and deliver an unforgettable day of live music, delectable food, and family-friendly fun. On Sunday, November 12, 2023, we took center stage at Pensacola's Museum Plaza in Downtown Pensacola, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Headlining was none other than the Dirty Dozen Brass Band! The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, a groundbreaking ensemble from New Orleans, has had an immense impact on the city's brass band scene.



In addition to the headliners, Jazz for Justice brought two local favorites to the stage. The 9th Avenue Brass Band was back in 2023 to bring that second line style brass back to the stage, along with Pensacola locals Whiskey & Water! Whiskey & Water's combination of rough New Orleans rasp and smooth flowing rhythms got the crowds dancing.





Dancing with the Stars

The much-anticipated event graced the Grand Ballroom at Doak Campbell Stadium on Thursday, December 7, 2023, igniting the stage. Each dancer wowed the audience with a fire under their feet and passion in their dance moves. Altogether, the 2023 dancers raised over \$70,000! Celebrity Dancers include:

- *Carrie Boyd*
- *John Fuchs*
- *Renée Gordon*
- *Meghan Munroe Lisson*
- *Kelly Kibbey Smith*
- *Crystal Stephens*
- *Ray Thompson*
- *Eddie Williams*

Spirited Celebrity Dancers received invaluable support from local dance professionals and prominent studios across Tallahassee, including Timberlane Arts and Dance Academy, Studio D, FSU Swing Dance Club, Florida State University School of Dance, Gabriel Williams, and Alex Medina.

Award Winners



Judges' Choice
RENÉE GORDON



People's Choice
JOHN FUCHS

INVESTING IN LSNF



ENDOWMENTS

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



FOUNDERS OF JUSTICE

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



EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

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



SUSTAINED GIVING

Become a sustaining donor through the Justice365 campaign.



LASTING LEGACY

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



CY PRES

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



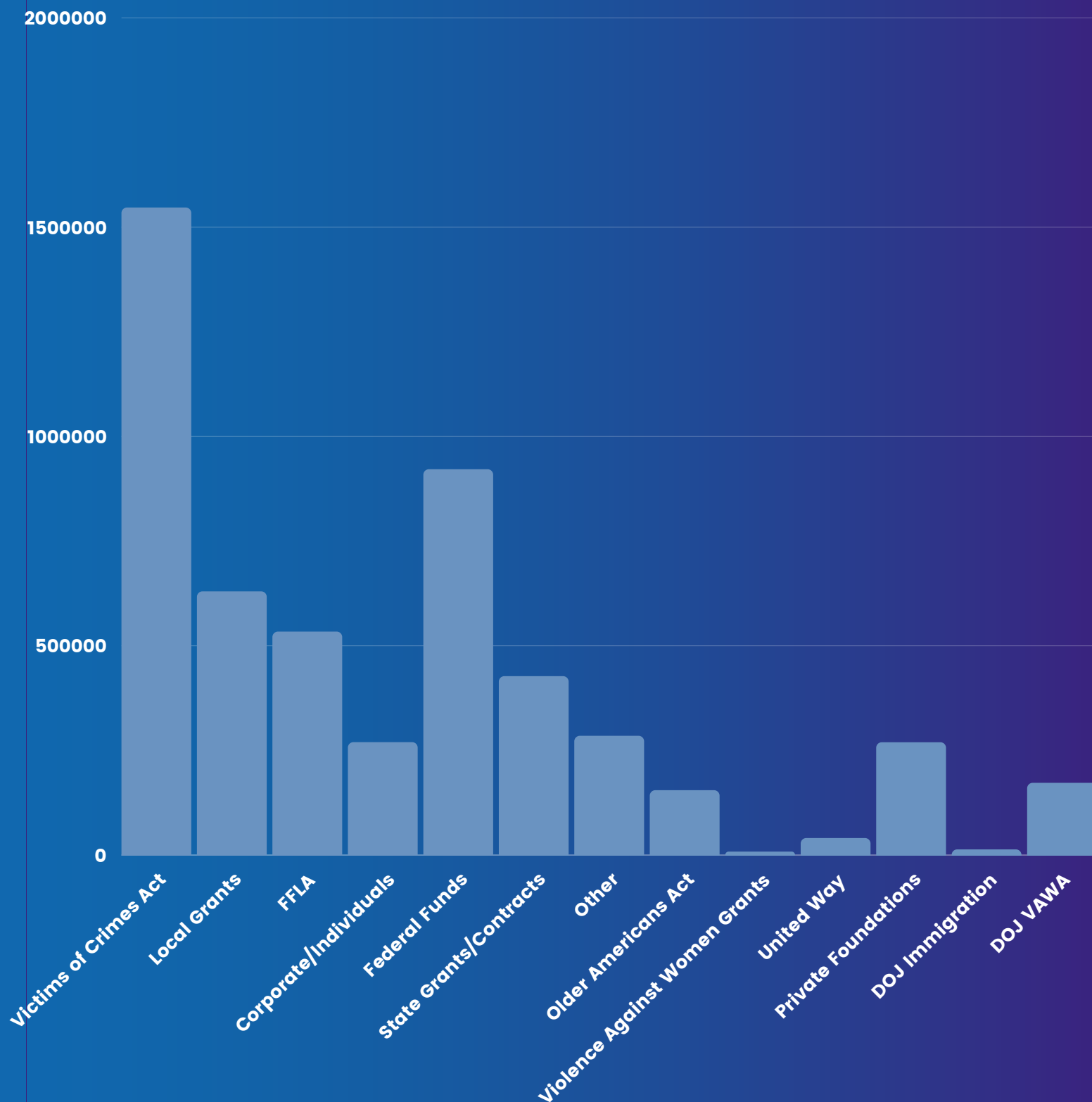
PARTNERS IN SERVICE

Members of The Florida Bar can meet their pro bono goal by contributing to LSNF's Partner's in Service Campaign.

\$113,851

Raised during the
Partners in Service Campaign

2023 REVENUE



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, LSNF would like to thank our funding partners.

FUNDING PARTNERS

90Works

AARP Foundation

Advantage Aging Solutions

Apalachee Regional Planning Council

Bay Area Legal Services

Bay County Commission

Calhoun County Commission

City of Tallahassee

City of Pensacola

City of Quincy

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Family Promise of the Big Bend

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Florida Office of the Attorney General

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Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Foo Foo Festival

Franklin County Commission



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 Legal Services of Greater Miami
 Leon County Commission
 Liberty County Commission
 National Low-Income Housing Coalition
 Northwest Florida Area Agency on
 Aging
 Okaloosa County Commission
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 Refuge House
 Santa Rosa County Commission
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 U. S. Department of Justice, Office of
 Violence Against Women
 Wakulla County Commission
 Walton County Commission
 Washington County Commission

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Emerald Coast



United Way
of Northwest Florida



United Way
of West Florida



United Way of the Big Bend



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 Our Children. Our Community. Our Future.

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“

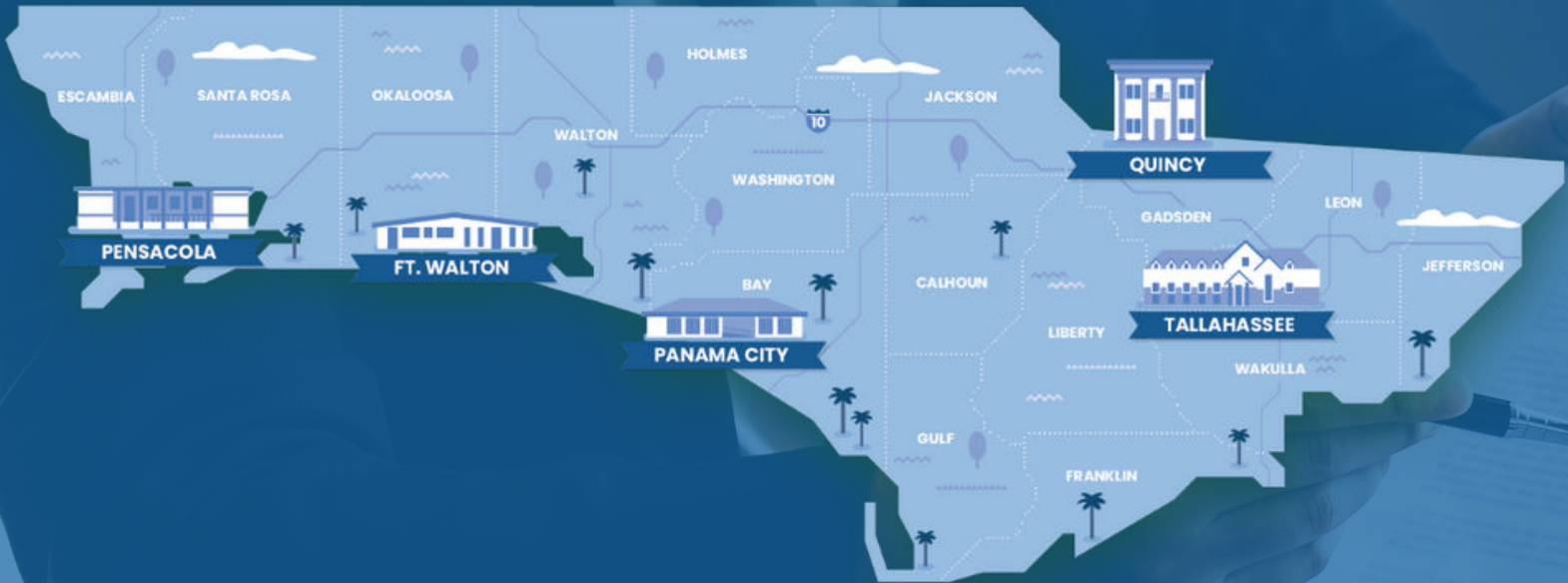
I really believe that, at its foundation, legal practice is about service. Lawyers can make a real difference in the lives of people every day, and we should strive to do so.

Renée Gordon
Attorney at Law

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:

[CLICK HERE](#)

We thank you for your ongoing support of Legal Services of North Florida!



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