Dear Supporters and Friends of Legal Aid

I begin my first year as Chair of the Board energized by the Legal Aid Society of Columbus’s path toward excellence. Reporting on our performance in 2015 is an exciting way to share with our community just how far LASC has come, and how prepared we are to take advantage of our upcoming opportunities.

Access to justice is a real thing for the almost 8,000 clients we served in 2015. We kept families together, changed the lives of veterans and kids, inspired volunteers to help, and did our best to improve the quality of life of our fellow Ohioans.

As you will read, we have been able to achieve success for large groups through some innovative impact litigation. And we have shown time and again since the recession how to be creative in serving the same number of clients with severely reduced staff.

This is not a lament, however, about reduced resources, because we have had unprecedented support from the local legal community in the past year, and finally stand poised to begin increasing our services and representation.

I hope that you will join me in celebrating LASC’s success in 2015, and consider supporting us financially or through volunteering in 2016 as we grow toward the excellence our community so richly deserves.

Molly S. Crabtree
A VOICE FOR THE GROWING NUMBER IN NEED

In 2015, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus (LASC) served 7,968 clients including:

- **1,225 Individuals with disabilities**
- **1,300 Veterans**
- **2,088 Seniors**

Legal services were provided in the areas of family, consumer rights, housing, benefits, and tax law. These services resulted in over $6 million in financial benefit to our clients, including:

- Ensuring critical food assistance for 107 households.
- Securing vital health coverage for 117 households.
- Resolving monetary claims against clients successfully in 117 cases.
- Stopping creditor harassment for 73 clients.
- Returning $35,614 in tax refunds for clients.
- Relieving $264,569 in tax debt for clients.
- Achieving independence through divorces involving custody, spousal support, or property settlements for 180 families experiencing hardships, including homelessness or abuse.
- Preventing imminent loss of housing for 92 subsidized housing clients.
- Helping 95 families renting sub-standard housing with their conditions issues.
- Ensuring critical food assistance for 107 households.
- Securing vital health coverage for 117 households.
- Resolving monetary claims against clients successfully in 117 cases.
- Stopping creditor harassment for 73 clients.
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- Preventing imminent loss of housing for 92 subsidized housing clients.
- Helping 95 families renting sub-standard housing with their conditions issues.

**Pro Bono Program**

In 2015, the Pro Bono Program was supported by 630 total volunteers who provided 20,300 donated hours to serve our clients.

- **69 Debtors** obtained fresh start bankruptcies.
- **71 Tenants** received representation in evictions and escrow actions.
- **190 Seniors** received basic estate planning help.
- **500 Homeless individuals and families** obtained information or advice at shelter legal clinics.
- **750 Veterans** received assistance at VA Ambulatory Care Center brief advice clinics.

**Total Pro Bono Attorneys:**

- 2015 - 417 (30% increase from 2014)

**Total Clients Served by Pro Bono Attorneys:**

- 2015 - 2,600 (12% increase from 2014)
Opening Up Critical Lines of Communication for Low-Income Immigrants

After President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 13166 requiring federally-assisted programs to draft and implement language access plans that would ensure that individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) would have meaningful access to their programs, the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) drafted a Language Access Plan, promising to translate all vital documents into Spanish and Somali. By 2014, CMHA’s Language Access Plan had been removed from the CMHA website, voicemail options were only in English, and vital documents were not being translated. After months of informal advocacy, LASC filed an Administrative Complaint with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), alleging that CMHA’s failure to implement its Language Access Plan was a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. After HUD’s office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity advised that it was opening an investigation based on the Complaint, CMHA agreed to a Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA). In September of 2015, the parties reached an agreement, requiring CMHA to draft and implement a new Language Access Plan that will be monitored by HUD until 2018. Provisions include an obligation to (a) translate vital documents and update language voice responsive systems into Spanish and Somali; (b) create systems for CMHA employees to access interpreters; (c) give all staff “I speak” cards; and (d) post fair housing posters in Spanish and Somali.

Ensuring Critical Health Coverage for People in Poverty: Homewood vs. McCarthy

The Plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed by the Legal Aid Society of Columbus, Southeastern Ohio Legal Services and Marshall & Morrow reached a settlement agreement with the Ohio Department of Medicaid on May 11, 2015. The agreement brings Ohio’s Medicaid renewal process into compliance with federal law and results in the reinstatement of Medicaid coverage for all beneficiaries across Ohio who lost coverage between January 1, 2015 and March 31, 2015 as a result of the flawed renewal process. The agreement also reinstates coverage for the individual Plaintiffs and members of the two organizational Plaintiffs, Community Development for All People and Community Refugee and Immigration Services, who lost Medicaid coverage as a result of Ohio’s Medicaid renewal process. More than 180,000 individuals had their coverage reinstated. Beyond reinstatement of Medicaid coverage, the agreement requires the Department to make a number of improvements to the Medicaid renewal process going forward including the creation of a statewide telephone renewal option, improvements to the online renewal process, and a requirement that the Department review information available in state and federal databases to determine beneficiaries’ continued Medicaid eligibility before requesting such information from individuals at renewal. It also requires the Department to translate the renewal packet into Spanish and Somali, include information on the availability of interpreter services in 91 languages, and ensure that Medicaid terminations include information explaining the reason for the termination and the individual’s appeal rights.
Keeping Food on the Table

Based on a few individual cases, LASC determined that the Franklin County Department of Job & Family Services (FCDJFS) was not correctly calculating food stamp eligibility for individuals when a portion of their rent went toward shared utility expenses. After engaging in direct advocacy targeted at specific complexes where the utility issue existed, LASC connected with a number of individuals to help ensure their monthly food stamp allotments increased to the correct level. As a result of the self-help information they received from LASC, residents of one complex experienced food stamp increases from an average of $20/month to $135/month per individual. In total, this has accounted for an increase of $47,316 in benefits per year. For more challenging cases, LASC staff attorneys directly represented clients, resulting in $15,768 in increased benefits per year. A service coordinator for one of the complexes reflected on the impact of LASC’s efforts, noting that “[n]ot only does this assist our residents from an enhanced nutritional standpoint, which promotes better health and successful aging in place, it has also ensured peace of mind and food security. A resident nearing 100 years of age shared with me that this is the first time in her life that she has not been worried about having enough food. There have been countless other comments such as this. I’ve had the remarkable privilege to be with many residents when they learn of their approval of increased food stamps, have wiped the tears of joy they’ve shed, and have witnessed the difference this has made in their lives.”

Naturalization Assistance

In collaboration with the Legal Department of JPMorgan Chase and immigration attorneys in the community, LASC began offering Naturalization assistance to low-income permanent residents in Columbus in 2015. The first successful clinic took place in October at the Bhutanese Nepali Community Center.

Cocktails for a Cause

LASC Board and staff members served as guest bartenders at Denmark on High for “Cocktails for a Cause” - our first event-based fundraiser held in July. Pro bono attorneys and community supporters attended, and profits went to support LASC programming.
“He made me feel like I was nothing.”
Kacey Bailey describes her experience living with her abusive ex-husband before reaching out to the Legal Aid Society of Columbus (LASC) for assistance in early 2015. After two years of attempting to file for divorce on her own, Kacey turned to LASC for help with securing safety and stability. Her husband had been charged criminally for assaulting her and two of the couple’s four children, and Kacey’s situation was dire. She had tried to fix the problem by herself, but navigating the domestic court on her own proved terribly intimidating for Kacey, whose husband had continually made her feel stupid. “I couldn’t pay for an attorney on my own,” she recalls. “If it weren’t for Legal Aid, I don’t think I would have gotten a divorce.”

As a result of the CPO and divorce, Kacey’s life and the lives of her children have been transformed: “My children went from being scared of everything to smiling and loving life. Whenever I left the house before, they would worry, and today, they tell me to go have fun. My 10-year-old used to shake when her dad was around. Now, she can actually be a kid and not feel like she has to take care of her mother.”
Imagine living in a house infested with bedbugs. Your bathtub is rusted and unusable. There are loose wires poking out of holes in the wall. Each day, while you and your children bathe in a large plastic tub to avoid the rust, you find new bites. Each day, you pray that it will get fixed. It never does. For some, this may seem like a bad dream. For Corissa, this was her reality.

Before contacting the Legal Aid Society of Columbus (LASC), Corissa had experienced several issues like this with her landlord. With her old lease expiring and her Section 8 subsidized housing voucher about to as well, Corissa had to find housing in a hurry. The property that she located was approved by the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), with a list of issues to be fixed sent to the landlord. In March 2012, Corissa and her family moved in.

With the help of LASC attorney Tamara Parker, who filed a lawsuit on Corissa’s behalf, Corissa and her family were able to escape the negligence of her landlord. By November of 2014, Corissa had moved into a livable property for her and her family. In 2015, they prevailed on the lawsuit against her landlord, and Corissa’s way of living was restored.

After the Legal Aid Society of Columbus (LASC) successfully aided her through a divorce in 1986, Charlean Hanna knew exactly where to go when she was having trouble receiving her Medicaid. She was employed as a drug and alcohol technician, but the nature of her job meant that each year, Charlean was laid off for a period of a few months. Because the consistent layoffs reduced her annual income significantly, she was financially eligible to receive Medicaid, a subsidized medical insurance program. Charlean had been approved for Medicaid in 2014, so when she was denied after re-applying in 2015, she did not understand the basis for the denial. Knowing that LASC helped people who couldn’t afford representation, she reached out in the hopes of alleviating the confusion. Once LASC Attorney Kristy Michel submitted necessary information to the Franklin County Department of Job & Family Services, a redetermination of Charlean’s Medicaid case was prompted and her coverage was reinstated, giving her the peace of mind. “Having medical insurance is very important for me,” explains Charlean. “I have extremely high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and I need to be able to go to the doctor on a continual basis.” Thanks to Kristy, “I feel great now,” Charlean beams. “I loved my experience with LASC.”

After four years of living at a YWCA transitional living facility, stroke victim, Mary Chandler had finally obtained a Section 8 voucher and moved into her own apartment. Unfortunately, she was unable to turn on the electricity due to an old utility bill and her landlord began to threaten eviction. “I had to light candles. I couldn’t breathe. I didn’t know what was going to happen,” Mary recalls. A Chapter 7 Bankruptcy filed by LASC Attorney Melissa Linville allowed Mary to reinstate her utilities, keep her Section 8 Voucher and ultimately avoid the loss of her home.
“Marie” is a 70 year old woman. She had a stroke last year and struggles when she speaks. Due to issues related to her stroke, she was forced to sell her house and enter the rental market. She found an apartment but the landlord insisted that Marie pay not only a security deposit, but also the first six months of rent. Unfamiliar to the rental market, Marie paid as agreed.

After she moved in, she requested that the landlord take care of some conditions issues, but he was unresponsive to her multiple pleas for help. Marie also learned of several break-ins in the neighborhood and felt unsafe. Eventually, she sent a letter advising that she would be moving in thirty days. After she moved out, the landlord re-rented the apartment almost immediately. Family members encouraged her to seek help from LASC, where the staff first helped her write two letters to the landlord requesting the return of her security deposit and the rent she had paid for the months after she moved out. The LASC Volunteer Resource Center then referred Marie to pro bono attorneys Celia Kilgard and Jim Abrams of Taft, Stettinius & Hollister LLP, who negotiated a settlement that resulted in Marie getting back her deposit and the rent she paid for the months after she moved out.

“This was a perfect example of the importance of understanding the resources that are available in your community,” explains Celia. Although Celia regularly assists LASC with pro bono referrals, this case in particular revealed how disenfranchised low-income individuals can be. “She took this issue very personally,” Celia recalls, describing how Marie was very emotional whenever they met, and even hugged them at the conclusion of the case. Marie felt the tangible and intangible impact of having an advocate on her side: “I was finally able to buy the things I needed again” said Marie. “I just can’t say enough good things about [my attorneys]. They were wonderful and worked in my best interest the entire time.”

Expanding Our Services

Jewish Family Services Clinic: In the fall of 2015, LASC joined with Jewish Family Services (JFS) to offer a monthly brief advice and service clinic for low-income individuals and families either served by JFS or residing in the local Near East community.

Fresh Start Clinic Expansion: In September 2015, LASC expanded its “Fresh Start Clinics” to include providing assistance to restored citizens applying for Certificates of Qualification for Employment. These important tools remove certain licensing and employment barriers for individuals with criminal records eager to reenter the workforce. LASC partnered with Akron University Law School and Capital Law School for its September event. With the assistance of generous donors, LASC continues to host Fresh Start clinics every few months and engage in outreach to the reentry community.

New Madison County Clinic: LASC kicked off its new Madison County brief advice clinic in the summer of 2015. Volunteer attorneys from Madison County helped staff this quarterly clinic, which took place at the London Public Library.
## 2015 Financials

### Statement of Financial Position

**December 31, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents</td>
<td>538,249</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Accounts and Grants Receivable</td>
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<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
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<td>Property and Equipment-Net</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,481,554</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accrued Payroll and Related Liabilities</td>
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<td>Other Liabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,735,309</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Liabilities and net assets** | **$2,481,554** |

### Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

**December 31, 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue and Support</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Revenue and Support</td>
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<td>Grants and Contracts</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
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<td>Revenue and Support</td>
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<td>Total Revenue</td>
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<table>
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<th>Expenses</th>
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<td>Expenses</td>
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<td>Salaries and Benefits</td>
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<td>Professional Fees</td>
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<td>Occupancy</td>
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<td>Telephone-Communications</td>
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<td>Office Supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>Travel and Training</td>
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<td>Dues</td>
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<td>Library</td>
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<td>Litigation</td>
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<td>Other Expense</td>
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<td>Depreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase in Net Assets</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Net Assets</td>
<td>361,171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The legal profession was good to me, and I am glad to be giving back in some small measure.”

Kevin Duffy

“The look of gratitude or the feeling of relief expressed by a worried client with nowhere else to turn is all we need.”

Larry Barker
“When you do good for others, not only do you feel good about it, but nine times out of ten, it helps you in other ways.”

Chris Gallutia

“There is no price that can be put on a heartfelt ‘thank you.’ If you do not get a warm feeling, you may want to check your pulse.”

Chris Gallutia
“I can only imagine the difference these programs make in people’s lives. For me, it is a few hours out of a month, but for them, it could be they get to keep food on the table.”

Eric Henricks
Nationwide Insurance

Glenn Redick
Anne Reed
Robin Reichenberger
Dean Reinhard
Christine Retherford
Alicia Reynolds
Kenneth Richards
Curtis Richardson
David Roark
Don Roberts
Timothy Robinson
Scott Robinson
Meagan Roeth
Mallory Rohr
Tonya Romer
Emily Root
Michael Rourke
Garth Rowbotham
Kathy Royer
Rachel Rubey
Kristin Sabgir
Lauren Sabo
Dan Sabol
George Sain
Ryan Sander
Joan Sant
Hillary Santiago-Burgos
Amrita Sanyal
Ryan Sarazin
Phillip Sarnowski
Eden Sarver
Lakshmi Satyanarayana
John Sauter
Matthew Schaeffer
Teresa Scharf
Fred Scharf
Sara Scheinbach
Adam Scheps
Samantha Scherger
Sara Schiavone
James Schoenewald
Larae Schraeder
Keith Scott
James Seguin
Tad Semons
Sunrita Sen
Brad Sena
Kaile Sepnafski
Kyle Serrott
Colleen Settineri
Abby Shackelford
Paras Shah
Neda Shaheen
Babak Shakouri
Desiree Shannon
Mike Sharvin
Alicia Shaw
Peter Sherwood
S. Courter Shimeall
Ralph Silvestri
Inna Simakovsky
Robert Simon
Nancy Simunic
Philip Sineneng
Callan Slavin
Kathleen Smith
Patricia Smith
Meredith Snyder
Jed Sonstroem
Beatrice Sowald
Nicole Spaatetz
Daniel Spafford
Amelia Spencer
Renata Staff
Spencer Stafford
Brandi Staley
John Stark
Jason Starling
Kate Steffy
Traci Stevenson
Erik Stock
Bradley Stoll
Catherine Strauss
Matthew Strayer
Herbert Strayer
Bradley Strickling
Cristin Sturtz
Andrew Sutter
Asafu Suzuki
Anthony Szuhay

“It’s the satisfaction of knowing that I’m providing valuable legal assistance to seniors who are making important end-of-life decisions. It’s been a very joyful experience.”

Kelly McCloud
Office of Ohio Attorney General
Mike DeWine

Angela Meddock
Luke Meenach
Andrew Meis
David Melcer
Jetta Mencer
Jesse Mendel
Julie Menke
Benjamin Menker
Walter Messenger
Ashley Messick
Azure'D Metoyer
Corey Meyer
Kristy Michel
Kathy Milenkovich
Lori Miller
Tasha Miracle
Greg Mitchell
Adelia Mohan
Stacey Moises
Andrew Moody
Gabrielle Moore
Delores Moore
Karen Morauski
Meredith Moriarty
Eric Morton
Elizabeth Moyo
Rupa Mukherjee
Kellie Murnane
Jonathan Murphy
Philip Musser
Raennell Nagel
Shannon Nannapaneni
Bhavani Navaneedhan
Tracy Nave
Scott Needelman
Vanessa Nelson
Laura Nesbitt
David Neubauer
Laura Nichols
John Nieft
Timothy Nittle
Joseph Njeri
Karim Nordstrom
Kevin Oles
Ashley Oliker
Ositadimma Onyia
Lucas Opperman
Janice Oriakhi
Erin Ormdorf
Luke Overmeyer
Thomas Palmer
Ray Pantle
Giuseppe Pappalardo
Donna Parisi
James Park
Kelly Parks
Richard Parsons
Joseph Patchen
Emily Patrick
David Patterson
Andrew Peiffer
Traci Peoples
Sarah Persinger
Colin Peters
Maria Petrie
Anthony Pezzutti
Joseph Pickens
Sarah Pierce
Janica Pierce Tucker
Sandra E. Pinkerton
Nicholas Pittner
Denise Pleska
Bill Pohlman
Steve Polk
Alex Pomerants
Rosemary Pomeroy
Gregory Port
Stephen Porte
Molly Porter
Loucie Powers
Julie Presas
Gary Price
Christy Prince
Melissa Purcell
James Qualls
Callie Query
Sara Radcliffe
Marie Ragias
Meghna Rao
Jacqueline Rapier
Chris Rapking
Robert Ratchford

LASC
The Legal Aid Society of Columbus
2015 ANNUAL REPORT
“It is so great to see how you can impact someone’s life - whether it’s stopping a wage garnishment or reinstating someone’s utilities during a brutally cold week.”

Paul & Sondra Bryson
Bryson Legal, LLC

2015 ANNUAL REPORT
All In Campaign

Through The Columbus Bar Foundation, LASC has received pledges for the All in Campaign from:

Bailey Cavalieri, LLC
Baker & Hostetler LLP
Barnes & Thornburg LLP
Bricker & Eckler LLP
Carlile Patchen & Murphy LLP
Carpenter Lipps & Leland LLP
David Meyer, Esq.
Dinsmore & Shohl LLP
Frost Brown Todd, LLC
Ice Miller LLP
Isaac Wiles Burkholder & Teetor, LLC
James E. Arnold & Associates, LPA
John and Ginny Elam Family Fund of the Columbus Bar Foundation
Jones Day
Kegler Brown Hill & Ritter, LPA
Luper Neidenthal & Logan, LPA
Maguire & Schneider, LLP
Murray Murphy Moul & Basil LLP
Organ Cole LLP
Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP
Ross Foundation: Bill Loveland, Esq.
Squire Patton Boggs
Steptoe & Johnson PLLC
Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP
Thompson Hine LLP
Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP
Whitt Sturtevant LLP
Zeiger Tigges & Little LLP
Funders

ADAMH Board of Franklin County
Alvis House
American Academy of Matrimonal Lawyers
Chester Foundation
City of Columbus
Columbus Bar Foundation
Equal Justice Works
Franklin County Senior Options
GUND Foundation
Legal Services Corporation
Nationwide Children’s Hospital
Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation
Reinberger Foundation
Southern District of Ohio Federal Court
Taxpayer Advocate Service
TaxTime of Central Ohio
Title III, Older American’s Act
Title XX through Franklin Co. DJFS
T.O.U.C.H.
United Way Union County
United Way Delaware County
United Way Marion County
Victims of Crime Act Funding (VOCA)