For the past 50 years, LAF has provided free, high quality, civil legal services to the most vulnerable people living in Cook County. By resolving critical legal problems that trap people in poverty, LAF has helped hundreds of thousands of individuals get their lives back on track.

Legal aid is one of the most effective tools to make lasting change and bring families out of poverty. LAF helps families stay in their homes and avoid homelessness; enables victims of abuse and trafficking begin new, safe lives; ensures veterans receive all the benefits to which they are entitled, and children receive the special education services they deserve; protects seniors victimized by consumer scams and employees victimized by wage theft and employment abuses. Because of LAF, every year thousands of people obtain justice and begin the move out of poverty.

LAF relies on private donations to fulfil its mission. With government funding for civil legal services on the chopping block, individual and corporate contributions like yours are more important than ever. With your ongoing and increased financial support, LAF will remain the source of the best legal help money can’t buy.
"Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it."

Those were the words of President Lyndon B. Johnson 50 years ago in a speech that kicked off the War on Poverty, which in turn gave birth to the federal Office of Economic Opportunity, and to legal aid lawyers who built the LAF many rely on today. We have weathered many changes – including names and locations, funding feasts and famines, and we were proud to celebrate LAF’s 50th Anniversary in 2016.

In 1966, the Office of Economic Opportunity awarded two grants to two Chicago legal aid organizations which later became the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago, now known simply as LAF. In 1974, finding that “a need to provide equal access to the system of justice in our nation for individuals who seek redress of grievances,” Congress established the Legal Services Corporation and transferred the OEO’s legal services programs to LSC. The Legal Services Corporation remains LAF’s partner to this day.

LAF was originally organized with a downtown office in the Loop, which housed its administrative staff and specialty law projects, and neighborhood storefronts where attorneys served clients with diverse legal needs. By 2011, many of those offices had merged or closed. LAF decided to consolidate all of its offices into one central location in the Chicago Loop, where clients can still reach us relatively easily. LAF reorganized its staff into Practice Groups, focusing on Housing, Consumer, Children and Families, Public Benefits, and Immigrants and Workers’ Rights issues.

The last half century has seen LAF grow and change in many ways, but the core of our work, providing high quality civil legal services for low-income and vulnerable people, and lifting them out of poverty, has remained the same. You – the legal community, foundations, and generous individual supporters – ensure that LAF has been around so long, and you lay the foundation for our next 50 years!
In 2016, LAF made equal justice a reality for 30,000 people across Cook County.

LAF clients are:
- 85% racial minorities
- 62% women
- 31% disabled
- 14% seniors
- 7% veterans
- 100% living in poverty

In 2016, LAF’s services had a financial impact of $27,540,459 for our clients, in increased assets, increased income, and decreased debts.
LAF saved homes for 1,406 people in 2016, through preserving housing subsidies, preventing unfair foreclosure, and stopping illegal evictions.

More than 75% of those homes have female heads of household.

Because of LAF’s intervention 682 people are safer, and are free of physical and financial abuse, in safe housing and safe schools, have good senior care, and more.

51% of them were children, and 45% were people with disabilities.

1,760 families gained access to healthcare or other health improvements, including food stamps, medicare, medicaid, protection from abusers, or admission to a long-term care facility.
I must admit I loved our year-long 50th Anniversary celebration. It was wonderful reconnecting with former staff, board members, volunteers, and clients. Hearing how LAF impacted their lives inspired all of us. As I write this today, government funding for legal aid is under attack. But I am confident that 50 years from now, LAF will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary – because the need for legal aid never abates, and civic-minded people in Chicago and suburban Cook County care too much about the vitality of our neighborhoods to ignore that need. In good times, poor people may do a little better, but in hard times they do a lot worse. Whenever LAF can keep a family housed, or stop an abuser from terrorizing his wife and his children, or get medical care for an elderly diabetic who’s never seen a doctor except in an emergency room – we make a real difference. And, while doing it, we make sure that justice for all is not just a slogan but a basic value.

Diana C. White
LAF Executive Director

NAME: Heidi, with Patrick and Athena
CAME TO LAF: Pregnant with the baby and fleeing her abusive husband

NAME: Larry
CAME TO LAF: Being sued for not paying insurance on a car he hadn’t owned for more than two years

NOW: Protected from unfair collections

NAME: Protected, in a safe home, with food stamps and health insurance for the kids

UPDATES AND FACES OF LAF
NAME: Mickey
CAME TO LAF: fighting cancer without a Power of Attorney

NAME: Elsie
CAME TO LAF: fired after "stealing" three tea bags from her office's cabinet of supplies

NOW: has documents declaring his intentions for his healthcare, and is in remission

NOW: settled for more than $5,000, and in a new job

When you read the stories in this Annual Report, I think you’ll see how important and life-changing LAF's work can be. LAF's staff is remarkable. They work tirelessly on behalf of their clients but they can't do it without your support. It takes money to make equal justice a reality for families living in poverty. Your ongoing support is our life blood.

When you read this Report and see what your contributions have helped us achieve, I hope you will be as proud as we are. In these difficult times, when federal funding for the poor is being threatened, we need you more than ever.

Thank you.

Maja C. Eaton and Richard J. Klawiter
Co-Chairs, LAF Governing Board of Directors
Vanessa had applied for a subsidized apartment through the Chicago Housing Authority, and was waiting to hear back – a wait that sometimes lasts for years. Finally, she got a letter from Hilliard Homes – a mixed-income development in the South Loop – stating that there was a two-bedroom unit available. This would be perfect for her family, as she was pregnant with her second child and would benefit from being near to resources like schools, stores, and businesses, as well as her work. At her open house appointment, Vanessa explained that she worked as a housekeeper, but was currently on short-term medical leave because of complications associated with her pregnancy. Hilliard took this information and denied Vanessa’s apartment application, on the grounds that she did not meet CHA’s requirements that residents be employed.

That’s when Vanessa came to LAF. Housing Attorney Jackie Koriath took her case, and pushed CHA to schedule a hearing before Vanessa’s baby was due. CHA was dragging its feet, and Jackie was afraid that Vanessa would lose her chance at this apartment. With time running out, Jackie threatened Hilliard Homes with a federal lawsuit, accusing them of discrimination and calling them out for violating the Fair Housing Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act, among others.

Before the lawsuit was even filed, Vanessa got a call from Hilliard Homes, offering her the apartment they had wrongfully denied, and welcoming her to her new home. Today, she lives there with her two children, and they are all doing well.

“The last thing that Vanessa needed during her high-risk pregnancy was a CHA mistake. I’m happy that LAF was able to resolve this issue before her baby was born, giving her comfort and stability during a challenging time.”

- Jackie Koriath

MEET VANESSA: A LAF STORY
Christina first came to LAF in 2007. Her husband was physically abusive towards her. He slapped her, hit her, blackened her eye, and fractured her arm – even in front of the children, – creating fear and sleepless nights for the whole family. LAF attorney Kate Shank described Christina’s abuser as “the very caricature of a bad guy.”

Over more than a decade, Kate repeatedly represented Christina to extend her Order of Protection and to obtain a divorce from her husband. In the divorce judgment, Christina received sole custody of her children, child support, freedom from marital debts, a share of her husband’s retirement accounts, and an order denying her husband visitation. The Order of Protection and divorce judgment also gave Christina something intangible and invaluable – the confidence to know she and her children could live their lives in peace. In 2014, Christina’s ex-husband agreed to a permanent restraining order which prevents him from initiating any contact with the children until they are 23 years old, and forbids him from ever having contact with Christina.

Today, Christina and her children are excelling. Janicee, 20, has graduated from high school and is taking classes at a city college. Junior is 18, and just received a full-ride scholarship to college for the fall. Christina works full-time and is happy and healthy.

“Even with child support that was unreliable at best, Christina has always managed to maintain steady employment, keep stable housing for the kids, keep them academically achieving, and stay strong for them. Christina and her children are a remarkable family and I am grateful to know them.”

- Kate Shank
Richard was in his mid-thirties, working as an engineer, and earning a six-figure salary when friends reported his behavior became explosive and aggressive. Then Richard withdrew from all social contact. After about 5 years of near-total social isolation, when his sister finally got him into medical treatment, doctors discovered a tumor the size of an orange on his brain. By this time, he had spent all his savings and was living without electricity in his condo that was in foreclosure.

Even after the tumor was removed, Richard continued to be disabled by debilitating headaches and has required intensive cognitive therapy. LAF represented Richard at his Social Security Disability Insurance hearing. The Social Security Administration agreed he was disabled, but only starting from when the tumor was discovered, because he had no documentation of the tumor before that date. Social Security ignored the letter from Richard’s neurologist stating that his reported behavioral changes years ago were consistent with the size, location, and type of tumor, and testimony from his friends and family, who described the changes they observed several years before doctors discovered the tumor. LAF attorneys Katie Shelton and Amy Marinacci appealed until a federal judge ordered Social Security to reconsider when Richard’s disability began, noting that “even Athena had a gestation period before springing fully grown and armored from Zeus’s head.”

Finally, years after the tumor was removed, SSA agreed that the tumor had been impacting Richard’s life long before it was discovered. Because of LAF’s advocacy, Richard received substantial back benefits and ongoing monthly income, so he can finally concentrate on his recovery without worrying about how to make ends meet.

“Richard’s perseverence and humor in the face of a 5-year Social Security battle and medical challenges has been inspiring. I am better for knowing him.”

- Amy Marinacci
Robert is an immigrant for whom LAF sought asylum in the United States. Like many immigrants, she left her entire world behind to seek a safer life. Roberta left Guatemala after her husband became abusive; he slapped her, choked her, and threatened her life. She hid her young daughter with her sister’s family, and got a tourist visa to come to the United States. When she landed at the airport, her first call was to LAF.

Attorney Nubia Willman took her case, knowing it wouldn’t be a sure victory. Asylum cases are difficult proceedings. She would have to prove not only that Roberta was a victim of domestic violence, but also that sending her back to Guatemala would result in her death because the government was unwilling and unable to protect her. Nubia also knew that asylum cases often take years – years Roberta did not have on her tourist visa – and that immigration deportation proceedings could begin at any point during her asylum application process.

Three years later, an interview was finally granted. Roberta and Nubia, along with Mary Ellen Diaz, who faithfully translated Roberta’s story, met with an asylum officer. Roberta told her story in detail, and answered the officer’s questions. This August, her asylum application was approved. But Roberta’s story doesn’t end there. Her daughter, still in Guatemala, developed brain cancer, and has few treatment opportunities outside of the U.S. Now that Roberta has asylee status, she will be able to petition for her daughter to enter the U.S. and obtain the care she needs.

"The resources, effort, and support LAF put into Roberta’s case reminded me of how committed we are to defending our immigrant communities who seek a better life for themselves and their children."

- Nubia Willman
20 years ago, Brianna’s next door neighbor was struggling with drug addiction, had 14 children, and could not manage any more. When she fell pregnant again, Brianna agreed to take the baby and raise him as her own. The baby, Paul, didn’t know his siblings and believed Brianna to be his mother, because she was the only mother he knew. Three years later, when the biological mother disappeared, DCFS removed her 14 children and mistakenly thought Paul was missing. Brianna read about it in the paper, so she contacted the authorities to let them know that she was caring for him and that he was happy and safe with her. DCFS used this information to remove Paul from Brianna’s care because she had no legal relationship to him. LAF and Jennifer Payne went to court with Brianna to try to convince the judge to return Paul to her care.

At a hearing in juvenile court, the judge told Brianna, “You’ve got to convince me that if I return this child to your care, I’m never going to read about him in the paper. I need to know that I’m doing the right thing. So tell me why I should return this child to you.” The whole courtroom turned to look at Brianna, who said, “Because I am his mother. When he cries at night he’s crying for me. He calls my name. And he’s in so much pain without me, and I’m in so much pain without him.”

There was not a dry eye in the courtroom. The judge declared, immediately, “You’re the mom.”

“Like Brianna, sometimes our clients are their own best advocates.”

- Jennifer Payne

A 50th Anniversary Story
LAF had a big year in 2016! Miriam Hallbauer and Tim Huizenga (top left) won a case in front of the Illinois Supreme Court for a client’s unemployment benefits. LAF and Sidley Austin attorneys (left) received the Seventh Circuit Bar Association Pro Bono and Public Service Award for Outstanding Work in the District Courts of Illinois for their work for residents of Cabrini-Green. LAF celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a birthday cake at the Justice is Served gala (bottom left). José Alonso was recognized by the Peace and Education Coalition (top right) and also received the Jerold S. Solovy Equal Justice Award. Diana celebrated with Board members Philip H. Corboy, Jr. and Maja Eaton (right) at the 50th Anniversary Luncheon. And LAF won a major victory over the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland when the Cubs beat the Indians in the World Series, and we got pierogis for it (bottom right).
# LAF STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year Ended December 31, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Permanently Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants and Contracts - LSC</td>
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<td>$ 6,305,685</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants and Contracts - Other Government</td>
<td>2,245,683</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,445,683</td>
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<td>991,221</td>
<td>1,772,547</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
<td>872,298</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>872,796</td>
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<td>Special Events</td>
<td>827,632</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>827,632</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cy Pres Awards</td>
<td>29,212</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29,212</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attorneys’ Fees</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>309,413</td>
<td>309,413</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest and dividend income</td>
<td>90,083</td>
<td>4,559</td>
<td>94,642</td>
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<td>Realized and unrealized gain on investments</td>
<td>155,658</td>
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<td>155,658</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>135,247</td>
<td>17,348</td>
<td>152,595</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services, in-kind</td>
<td>94,242</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>94,242</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets released from restrictions:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of program restrictions</td>
<td>8,485,293</td>
<td>(8,485,293)</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,126,569</strong></td>
<td><strong>(75,243)</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,051,326</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **EXPENSES**        |                        |                        |         |
| Program Services    | 12,531,946             | -                      | 12,531,946|
| General and administration | 519,606 | -                      | 519,606 |
| Fundraising         | 607,762                | -                      | 607,762 |
| **Total Expenses**  | **13,659,314**         | -                      | **13,659,314** |

| **CHANGE IN NET ASSETS** |                        |                        |         |
|                         | 467,255                | **(75,243)**           | 392,012 |

| **NET ASSETS**         |                        |                        |         |
| Beginning of Year      | 3,808,133              | 1,336,613              | 100,000 | 5,244,746 |
| End of Year            | **$ 4,275,388**        | **$ 1,261,370**        | **$ 100,000** | **$ 5,636,758** |

Source: Certified Financial Statements
### 2016 vs 2015 Financial Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
<td>$11,231,450</td>
<td>$11,245,881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>5,594,692</td>
<td>6,001,135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>2,200,597</td>
<td>1,864,304</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board-Designated Endowment</td>
<td>2,074,791</td>
<td>1,943,829</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Unrestricted</td>
<td>4,275,388</td>
<td>3,808,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Restricted</td>
<td>1,261,370</td>
<td>1,336,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently Restricted</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets</td>
<td>5,636,758</td>
<td>5,244,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities and Assets</td>
<td>$11,231,450</td>
<td>$11,245,881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Certified Financial Statements*

#### 2016 Total Revenue
- **Private Support (Foundations, Corporations, and Individuals)**: $4,464,496 (32%)
- **Cy Pres Awards and Attorneys’ Fees**: $338,625 (2%)
- **Investments**: $250,300 (2%)
- **Legal Services Corporation**: $6,305,685 (45%)
- **Other Revenue**: $246,837 (2%)

#### 2016 Total Expenses
- **Program Services**: $12,531,946 (92%)
- **Management and Administration**: $519,606 (4%)
- **Fundraising**: $607,762 (4%)
Reed Smith LLP
Schiff Hardin LLP
Barbara S. Steiner
Thomson Reuters

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Paul Hastings LLP
Philipps & Philipps Ltd.
Amy Reilly
Jessica Sklarsky
Emily Spitzer
St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church
The 1111 Foundation
The Claro Group
The PrivateBank
Veritext Legal Solutions
Diana & Peter White
Roger G. Wilson
Sheldon Zenner and Ellen Morgan

Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP
Francis Beidler Foundation
Elizabeth Chao
Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym Ltd.
Susan K. Laing
Alex M. Liberman

“I’ve been on the LAF Board for almost 20 years, and I know first-hand what an outstanding organization it is. I also know how important it is for all of us who care about making Chicago a fairer, more just city – lawyers and non-lawyers alike – to support LAF.”

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LAF Board Member
and Justice is Served emcee
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Charley and Jill Gross
Beverly Groudie
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Brian Haussmann
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Hoogendoorn & Talbot LLP
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The Hon. Dorothy Kinnaird, Retired.
Kramer Family Fund
Ross Kwasteniet
Leopardo Charitable Foundation

Sidley Austin LLP
Law Firm and LAF 50th Anniversary Sponsor

“Sidley has decided to celebrate LAF’s 50th Anniversary and honor the work it does by increasing our annual gift by 50% this year. There is no reason to believe that LAF’s work will be any less necessary in the next 50 years than it has been since 1966. As LAF embarks on its next half century of service – to its clients and to our community – we must lead the way in supporting LAF’s work.”

- Larry Barden,
Sidley Austin
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Kristen Lukaszak
Bradford P. Lyerla
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Paul Marcovitch & Chris Young
The Hon. Paddy McNamara
Maureen Mudron
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Michael and Mary Woolever
Art and Sue Zilberstein

$500+
Anonymous (3)

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IV Ashton
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Jennifer and Peter Friedenbach
John Neal Gavin
Sheri Ross and Charles Glick
David F. Graham
Nick Harris
Jared Thomas Heck
Richard Jay Hess
Veena Iyer
Mary Louise Kandyba

“
We became LAF supporters upon meeting our then-neighbors, the Roodmans, 40+ years ago. Our appreciation of LAF’s vital services increased exponentially during Paul’s nine years as a member of the Board of Directors in the 1990s. Admiration for Sheldon, Diana, and the entire LAF staff keeps us contributing.”

Paul & Susan Freehling
Longtime LAF Donors

2016 Donors (continued)
We thank all of our generous supporters who help make equal justice a reality for more than 30,000 people living in poverty in Cook County. However, owing to space limitations, we are unable to print the names of donors who contributed less than $500 in 2016.

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Shedden Law

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Discover Financial Services

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2016 LAF Governing Board of Directors

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Mike Haeberle
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Katie Jahnke Dale
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Thompson Coburn LLP

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