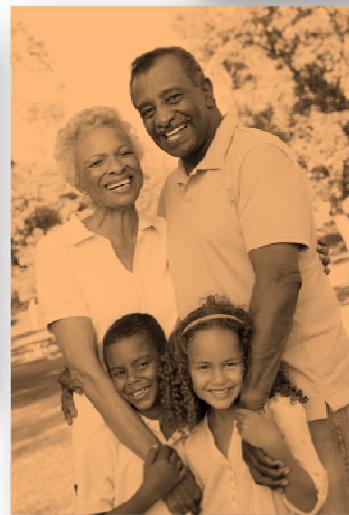
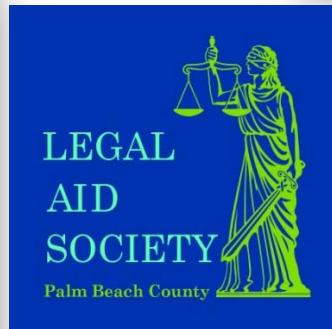


*...and justice for all*



Annual Report 2012

# 2012 The Year in Review

Dear Friends of Legal Aid,

In 2012, the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County made significant advancements in protecting the rights of the disadvantaged, children, families, elders and individuals in Palm Beach County. The outstanding support we continued to receive from our funding partners and individual supporters ensured that the most vulnerable members of our community received critical access to our judicial system to help them improve their quality of life.

A few of our most significant achievements in 2012 included:

- The formation of the **Palm Beach County Anti-Stalking Multi-Disciplinary Collaborative** to create guidelines for victim service providers and law enforcement to use in increasing services to victims and providing trainings for law enforcement, the judiciary and victim advocates on stalking and cyberstalking. The collaborative created a “Stalking Toolkit,” which is designed to educate law enforcement, advocates and the judiciary on best practices when assisting stalking victims.
- The creation of a **Wage Dispute Project** to serve low-income workers who have a dispute with their employers resulting from wages owed either due to nonpayment, underpayment or misclassification of the employees’ status. In 2012, the Project recovered \$115,915.38 in unpaid wage claims.
- The establishment of a **Senior Economic Justice Project** to address the legal needs of seniors who are victims of unlawful consumer business practices, particularly in the areas of mortgage foreclosure, wage garnishment and financial exploitation.
- The achievement of **2012 Certification** at the level of “**Excellence in Nonprofit Management**” by Nonprofits First®. This annual review process is based on a unified set of administrative standards meeting core federal, state, local and funder requirements. The Legal Aid Society is pleased to have received the highest level of certification, which represents our ongoing commitment to administration and management excellence.

These examples illustrate just some of the many ways that Legal Aid works to ensure that “Justice for All” is a reality in Palm Beach County. We greatly appreciate all our friends and supporters who assist us in helping our community.



Jeffrey A. Devore, Esq.  
President, Board of Directors

A blue ink signature of Jeffrey A. Devore, Esq., consisting of stylized, flowing lines.



Robert A. Bertisch, Esq.  
Executive Director

A blue ink signature of Robert A. Bertisch, Esq., consisting of stylized, flowing lines.

# Programs and Services

2 0 1 2

As one of the first social service agencies created to serve low-income individuals in Palm Beach County, the Legal Aid Society was established in 1949 with the goal of providing free legal advice to the economically disadvantaged throughout the county. Since its inception, the Legal Aid Society has been firmly committed to **ensuring justice for all** by providing high quality civil legal advice, representation and education to the disadvantaged of Palm Beach County so as to protect their personal safety, enhance their opportunities and living conditions, and promote self-sufficiency.

In 2012, over **7,000** low-income individuals received free legal services from Legal Aid, and an additional **2,000** individuals attended outreach and education events such as foreclosure defense clinics, immigration outreach seminars, fair housing rights presentations, elder abuse and exploitation prevention workshops, and taxpayer rights and responsibilities trainings. While the demand for our services consistently exceeds our capacity, we strive to represent those cases for which our services will have the greatest impact. In addition to providing direct legal services to individuals and families, Legal Aid staff often advocate for systemic change on matters that emerge from our cases.

The Legal Aid Society fulfills its mission by addressing a broad range of legal needs through the following six program areas:

## Children's Advocacy

- Educational Advocacy Project
- Juvenile Advocacy and Foster Children's Projects
- Relative Caregivers Project
- Legal Advocacy for Minor Mothers Project

## Family Advocacy

- Domestic Violence Project
- Family Law Project

## Elder Advocacy

- Elder Law Project
- Public Guardianship Project

## Health Advocacy

- Medical Legal Partnership Project
- Ryan White Legal Project

## Individual Rights Advocacy

- Fair Housing Project/Mortgage Foreclosure Defense Project
- Guardian Advocacy Project
- Immigrant Advocacy Project
- Wage Dispute Project

## Community Outreach

- Low Income Taxpayer Clinic
- Non-Profit Legal Assistance Project
- Pro Bono Project

# 2012 Program Highlights

The **Immigrant Advocacy Project** assisted 87 Haitian nationals re-registering for a temporary immigration program called “Temporary Protected Status” (TPS) within a two-month period. Many of these individuals suffer from chronic illness and, without re-registration assistance, would lose eligibility for the county based health insurance program. In addition, several of these applicants are HIV positive, and some are permanently disabled and residing in a county-funded rehabilitation center.

*“My Legal Aid attorney went above and beyond my expectations. He was always reachable and when he was not, he returned my calls immediately. He is a very knowledgeable man who instructed me on my case to the max. I can’t say enough good concerning him. A delightful representation of a law firm.”*

Fair Housing Project client



The **Domestic Violence Project** represented 1145 survivors of violence in injunction cases in Palm Beach County. That number represents *over one third of the total number of injunctions filed in the county*. Legal services provided included representation at hearings on injunctions for protection against domestic, dating, sexual and repeat violence and representation in violation of injunction cases. DVP attorneys also provided additional holistic legal services to victims in cases involving dissolution of marriage, paternity, housing and other matters.

The **Medical Legal Partnership Project** expanded its coverage area and now provides legal services to patients at seven low-income clinics in Palm Beach County, including four Federally Qualified Health Centers (West Palm Beach, Delray Beach, Lantana/Lake Worth and Belle Glade), Genesis Community Health in Boynton Beach, FoundCare Health Center in West Palm Beach and the Community Health Center in West Palm Beach. The program also accepts referrals from 211 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, the local helpline/crisis line.

*“Our attorney excelled at making corrections to my petitions towards the case and was generous with her time and patience. My daughter and I will be forever grateful for all she accomplished for us.”*

Family Law Project client

The **Public Guardianship Project** provided guardianship services to 106 wards, serving to greatly improve the quality of life for some of the most vulnerable and isolated residents of Palm Beach County. The **Guardian Advocacy Project** provided services to 23 wards in 2012 (up from 16 in 2011), serving to greatly enhance the quality of life for these developmentally disabled young adults who have no family to provide support or assistance.

# Program Highlights 2012

The **Educational Advocacy Project** continued working to remedy significant equal educational access issues for English Language Learners in Palm Beach County Public Schools by filing a National Origin discrimination complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice alleging violations of Title IV and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Equal Educational Opportunity Act based on the District's school registration policy that requires documentation that screened out children of undocumented parents. The USDOJ actively investigated the amended complaint and issued its Letter of Findings on August 31, 2012, which led to a comprehensive 30-page agreement between the Palm Beach County School District and the U.S. Department of Justice to remedy the violations found.

The Legal Aid Society's newly established **Wage Dispute Project** provided intake services to 238 employees alleging unpaid or underpaid wage claims and recovered \$115,915.38 for 59 of those individuals, with an average recovery of \$1,964.67 per client.

*"I am very thankful to Legal Aid and especially to my attorney for helping me through a very difficult and scary time. I had no idea what I was doing or getting myself into or if I could even see it through. From the very moment I met with my attorney, my nerves became calmer. She was helpful and empathetic to my personal situation. The date of the hearing, my attorney was like my 'knight in shining armor.' She handled things swiftly and she took control of the situation in a very professional manner. I am so thankful to have had her there on my side. I can finally breathe easy and can close this chapter in my life and look forward to much happier times!"*

*Domestic Violence Project client*

*"My Legal Aid attorney was able to accomplish what several private attorneys could not. She never got tired or impatient with the difficulty of dealing with government representatives, and she kept me informed on everything. I will always be grateful to her and to the Legal Aid Society."*

*Elder Law Project client*

The **Ryan White Legal Project**'s services remained critical for patients/clients gaining access to medical care and attaining stability and self-sufficiency with regards to medical care and other health-related services. Every client who received Medicaid or Medicare saved approximately \$20,000 per year from Ryan White funds. In addition, the average SSI recipient gets \$8,376/year (\$698.00 per month increased to \$710 as of January 2013), and the average SSD recipient gets \$12,768/year (\$1,064 per month). Clients receiving SSI and/or SSD benefits put significantly less burden on the limited financial assistance resources such as housing funds and emergency assistance available from other organizations and providers, including Ryan White-funded providers.

*"I am a senior citizen living in Palm Beach County. I had a problem concerning my daughter. I did not know what to do at that time and I had no money to pay a lawyer or doctors for evaluation and consideration. I had no knowledge how to handle the situation. The Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County solved that problem with confidence and cost zero penny. Now I can enroll my granddaughter in school and make medical decisions for my grandchildren. The Legal Aid Society provides great and important assistance to the Palm Beach County community. Thank you very much."*

*Relative Caregiver Project client*

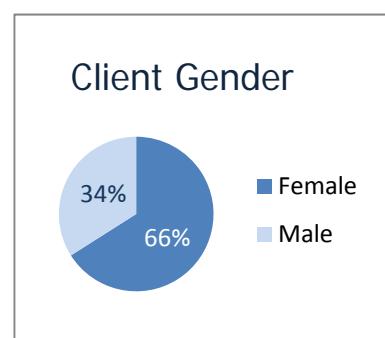
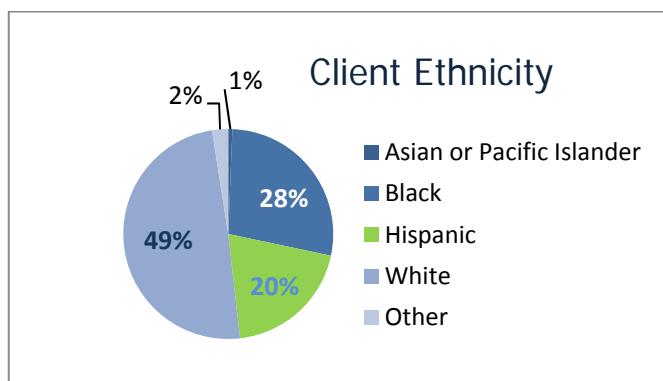
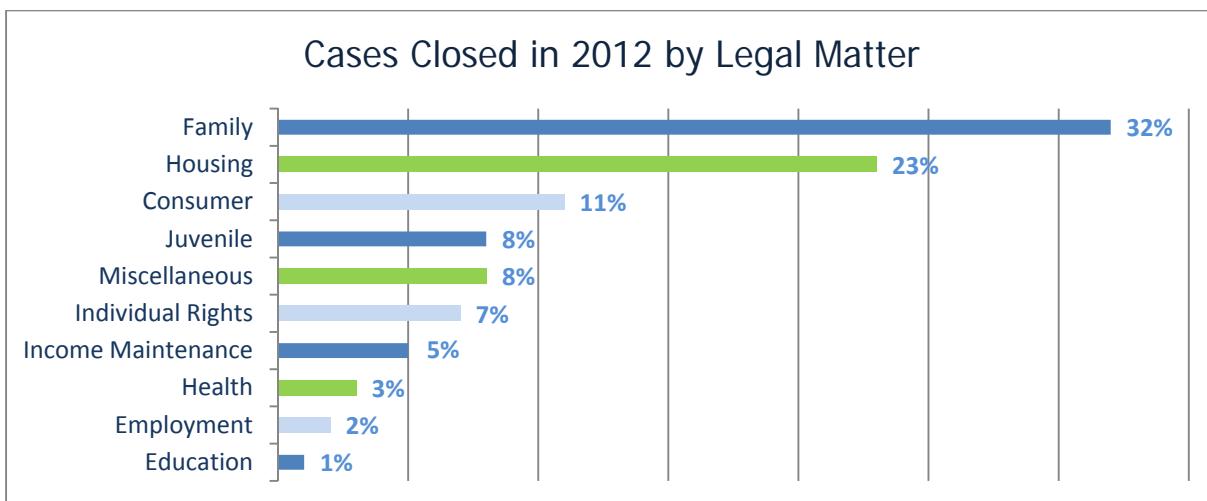
Of the **5447** cases closed by the Legal Aid Society in **2012**:

**3574** of the cases involved  
**female clients**

**2263** of the cases involved  
**senior citizens**

**1020** involved  
**domestic violence**

**722** involved children  
**under the age of 18**



### Client Geographic Breakdown

<b>42%</b>	Central	West Palm Beach, Lake Worth, Lantana, Hypoluxo
<b>31%</b>	South	Boynton Beach, Boca Raton, Delray Beach
<b>18%</b>	North	Riviera Beach, North Palm Beach, Palm Beach Gardens, Lake
<b>8%</b>	West	Belle Glade, Pahokee, South Bay, Canal Point, Loxahatchee,
<b>1%</b>	Out of county	

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City of Boca Raton – Department of Community Improvement  
Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties  
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United States Department of Housing and Urban Development  
United States Department of Health and Human Services  
United States Department of Justice – Victims of Crime Act  
United Way of Palm Beach County  
William and Helen Thomas Charitable Trust

# 2012 Financial Report

## Statement of Financial Position September 30, 2012

<u>Assets</u>	
Total Current Assets	2,523,693
Cash-designated	729,996
Deposits	5,532
Equipment (net of depreciation)	<u>108,618</u>
Total Assets	<u>3,367,839</u>

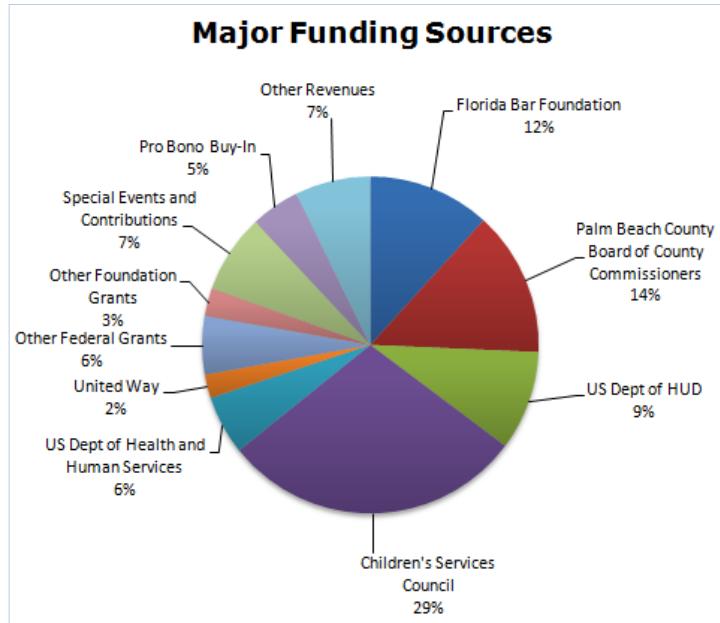
<u>Liabilities and Net Assets</u>	
Total Current Liabilities	568,545
Trust Accounts	729,996
Total Net Assets	<u>2,069,298</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>3,367,839</u>

## Statement of Activities For the Year Ended September 30, 2012

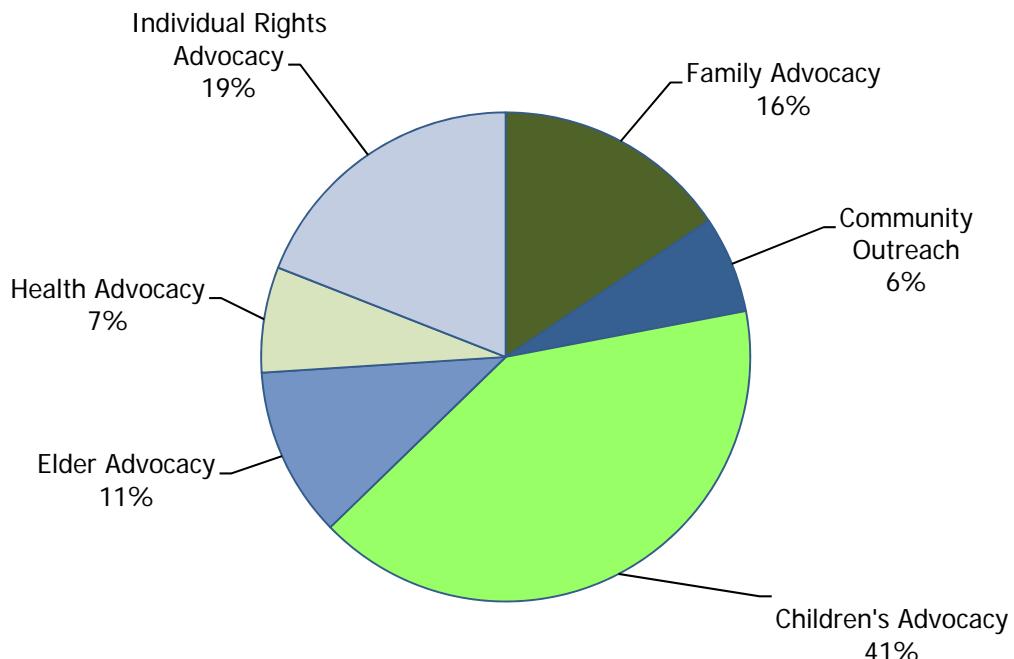
<u>Revenues</u>	
Federal Grants	1,675,932
State Grants	130,648
Local Government Grants	3,456,916
Foundation Grants	1,130,295
Other Grants	449,450
Investments	41,567
Program Service Revenue	115,749
Special Events and Activities	408,569
Contributions	579,384
Other Revenues	<u>61,453</u>
Total Revenues	<u>8,049,963</u>

<u>Expenses</u>	
Salaries and Benefits	6,360,274
Occupancy Costs	484,194
Equipment (Lease, Repair, Depreciation)	127,082
Fundraising	156,395
Sub-grants	40,626
Litigation Costs	76,521
Printing, Supplies & Library	117,925
Telephone & Postage	82,911
Travel	110,004
Training & Development	23,540
Professional Fees	33,040
Dues and Licenses	30,205
Insurance	25,084
Public Relations	9,192
Other Operating Expenses	<u>96,098</u>
Total Expenses	<u>7,773,091</u>

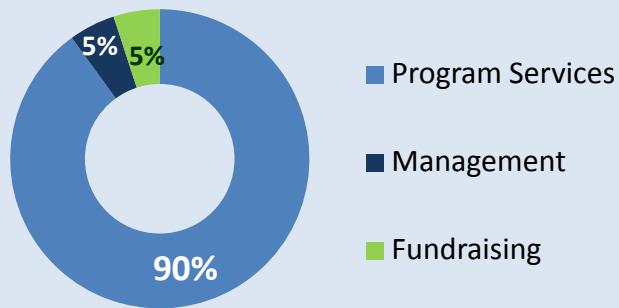
Change in Net Assets	<u>276,872</u>
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	<u>1,792,426</u>
Net Assets, End of Year	<u>2,069,298</u>



## Program Expenses



## Functional Expense Breakdown



In 2012,  
**90 cents of  
 every dollar raised**  
 was spent on  
**direct client  
 program services.**



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## Pro Bono Impact in 2012

**409**  
Number of Attorneys  
Providing Pro Bono  
Services

**1,115**  
Number of Attorneys  
Who Participated in  
Pro Bono Buy-Out

**447**  
Pro Bono Cases  
Opened

**446**  
Pro Bono Cases  
Closed

**Approximately  
3,101**  
Number of Pro Bono  
Service Hours  
Volunteered

Thank you for  
your generous donation  
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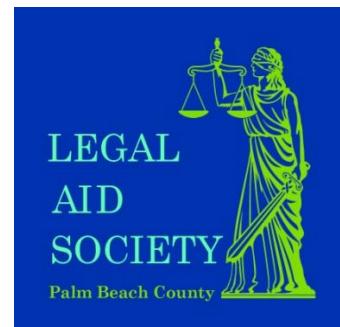


## OUR MISSION

To provide high quality civil legal advice, representation and education to the disadvantaged of Palm Beach County so as to protect their personal safety, enhance their opportunities and living conditions and promote self-sufficiency.

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423 Fern Street, Suite 200  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
(561) 655-8944  
(800) 403-8393 Toll free  
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2012 Annual Report