LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO

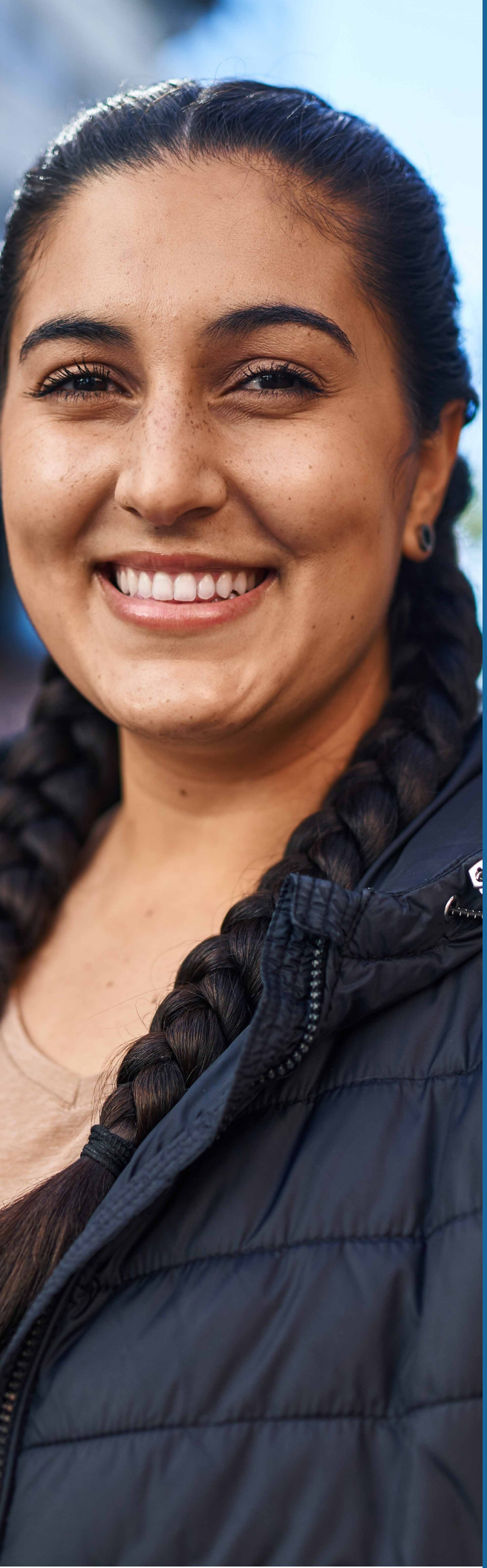
ANNUAL REPORT 2025



ADVANCING *Justice*

Since 1919

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO



LEGAL AID SOCIETY
OF SAN DIEGO

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WELCOME



Joanne L. Franciscus, Esq.
CEO/Executive Director



Joanna Fox, Esq.
Chairperson, Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

When our neighbors needed support most, you stepped forward.

In a year marked by uncertainty, the community came together to ensure that legal help remained within reach for thousands of people across San Diego County. Thanks to your generosity, more than 10,000 cases were closed in 2025 - a nearly 10% increase from last year - helping more of our neighbors find safety, stability, and opportunity.

We also witnessed an extraordinary outpouring of volunteer support. In 2025, 440 volunteers contributed more than 36,500 hours of service, helping Legal Aid meet growing community needs.

Behind every case closed is a person or family seeking the opportunity to move forward: a family avoiding homelessness, a veteran securing earned benefits, a survivor finding safety, or a senior preserving health and independence.

This report reflects what is possible when a community comes together to support its neighbors. We are deeply grateful for your partnership, generosity, and belief that justice should be within reach. Thank you for helping build a stronger San Diego.

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO

OUR IMPACT

21,024
clients and household members benefited from legal cases

+

23,565
clinic participants assisted through self-hep clinics

=

44,589
PEOPLE IMPACTED

36,540 people educated through presentations, webinars, and outreaches

$20,001,658 in economic benefits obtained for clients

Every $1 invested in the LASSD returns an average of **$5.11** in economic benefits in the form of financial recovery and avoided costs for clients, taxpayer savings, and boots to the local economy.

SUMMARY OF CASES CLOSED FOR CLIENTS IN 2025

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- **2,555** Domestic Violence Survivors
- **6,471** Children in household
- **2,986** Seniors
- **642** Veterans

10,164 CASES:

- **421** cases enhancing family safety, security, and stability for family law clients and survivors of domestic violence
- **5,611** cases preserving housing stability by preventing evictions and reducing homelessness
- **1,529** cases facilitating health and wellbeing by helping clients get, keep and use health coverage and medical care
- **1,374** cases helping maintain economic stability by protecting against creditor harassment, predatory lenders, and abusive debt collection practices
- **1,229** cases representing special vulnerabilities, including older adults and people with disabilities

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES



1,086 adults and children benefited from Legal Aid Society of San Diego's family support services.

LEGAL AID HELPS FAMILIES FIND SAFETY

Elvia came to us seeking help to protect her 12-year-old son from escalating conflict with his father. Although the parents were never married, they initially tried to manage co-parenting arrangements on their own after separating. Over time, the father refused to communicate or cooperate, frequently changed agreed-upon plans, and made major decisions about their son without involving Elvia.

He used the child as a messenger and even tore up notes from Elvia in front of him. He enrolled the child in activities during Elvia's parenting time, excluded her from important moments the child wanted to share with her, including his First Communion Mass, and blocked communication between mother and son during his parenting time. As the conflict intensified, the child was caught in the middle and placed under growing emotional strain.

At the same time, Elvia was the primary caregiver for her disabled adult son through the County's In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program. Living on a limited income and receiving no financial support from her younger son's father, she needed to relocate to a more affordable city outside San Diego County. Her attorney filed requests for both a move-away order and formal custody orders.

Once the father became involved in the court process, the child's emotional well-being deteriorated significantly. He began expressing thoughts of self-harm if required to continue visits with his father, making immediate intervention critical. Therapy was arranged and emergency court action was sought.

The court temporarily suspended visits and ultimately approved Elvia's move to Imperial County, recognizing the need for stability and clear boundaries. Final orders gave Elvia authority over day-to-day decisions, established structured contact between father and child, and prioritized the child's mental health. Her lawyer said that, "Knowing I was able to bring emotional stability to this child makes me proud to be a legal aid lawyer!"

**This story reflects real experiences, but some details have been modified to ensure confidentiality*

We provide legal assistance in the following areas:

Child Custody I Divorce I Visitation I Conservatorship I Support

PRESERVING THE HOME



12,011 adults and children benefited from Legal Aid Society of San Diego's housing services. Nearly 90% of clients in housing-related cases avoided homelessness.

LEGAL AID KEEPS PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES

When Georgia and her son, Ronin, escaped a violent situation involving Ronin's father, they hoped to finally find safety. Instead, after moving into a new apartment, they faced eviction and ongoing harassment from management.

Legal Aid discovered the family was not receiving housing accommodations and protections they were entitled to under disability laws and Section 8 regulations. "I felt very scared and confused trying to maintain my safe, happy home while dealing with the constant pressure from management," Georgia recalls.

Legal Aid intervened to stop the illegal eviction and helped the family secure a new apartment. Today, a safe, affordable home has given Ronin the stability to focus on school, activities, and simply being a child. Lower rent has allowed Georgia to provide healthier food and opportunities like surf and swimming lessons as the family continues to heal and build a more stable future.

"Without the help of LASSD, we would have been homeless," Georgia says. "LASSD saved our lives. I can't thank you enough for taking the time to help a single mom with a disabled child when she had nowhere left to go."

We provide legal assistance in the following areas:

Eviction Defense | Subsidized Housing | Landlord/Tenant Issues | Housing Discrimination | Mortgage Foreclosures

SAFETY, STABILITY, AND HEALTH



2,689 adults and children benefited from Legal Aid Society of San Diego's programs that improve safety, stability, and health.

LEGAL AID HELPS PROTECT HEALTH

An elderly couple sought help from LASSD's Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy (CCHEA) after facing overwhelming nursing facility costs for Jane, 73, who had suffered a traumatic brain injury. John went into debt to pay more than $12,000 in cost sharing, making basic household expenses impossible.

CCHEA advocates discovered that the local Medi-Cal office had failed to correctly apply special Spousal Impoverishment income rules. After advocacy with the county, the error was corrected and Jane received free Medi-Cal retroactive to April of the prior year.

When the nursing facility refused to reimburse the couple for more than $12,000 in payments, CCHEA educated the couple about their rights and worked with facility management. The facility ultimately agreed to issue the reimbursement.

"This year we all face new federal and state challenges in accessing health care. Your work is unique and essential for protecting San Diego families. You have been essential to maintaining Jane's health coverage, and made the county do the right thing. In fact, they referred us to you for help. That is the difference you made. By fighting through this for us, you gave us hope, direction, and a light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you for all that you do!" -John

**This story reflects real experiences, but some details have been modified to ensure confidentiality.*

We provide legal assistance in the following areas:

Medi-Cal | Medicare | Domestic Abuse | Private Health Insurance | Home and Community-Based Care

MAINTAINING ECONOMIC STABILITY



2,783 adults and children benefited from Legal Aid Society of San Diego's economic stability programs.

LEGAL AID HELPS PROTECT FINANCIAL STABILITY

Nicole's family faced an uncertain future after the death of her former partner and father of her children. Without the household's primary source of financial support, she feared losing her home. While searching for help, she was exploited by organizations promising solutions.

One company pressured Nicole to sell her home for far less than its value and later sued her, even after she exercised her legal right to cancel the agreement. Another organization connected her with an attorney who was later suspended by the State Bar, leaving Nicole fearful she would have to navigate the legal system alone.

Nicole turned to Legal Aid Society of San Diego. Our attorneys protected her rights and economic stability, ultimately helping her sell her home for hundreds of thousands of dollars more than she otherwise would have received.

One of her attorneys said, "After her husband's death, she was exploited during a period of extreme vulnerability. As a limited English speaker unfamiliar with her legal rights, she was left in an even worse position than when her problems began. Multiple LASSD attorneys worked on this complex case, addressing numerous intertwined legal and financial issues and helping untangle them to achieve the best possible outcome."

**This story reflects real experiences, but some details have been modified to ensure confidentiality.*

We provide legal assistance in the following areas:

CalFresh | Bankruptcy | Collection | Deceptive Sales | Student Financial Aid | Taxes

SPECIAL VULNERABILITIES



2,455 adults and children benefited from Legal Aid Society of San Diego's economic stability programs.

SENIORS I VETERANS I CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Alejandra and Ruben love their two children. Their son, Lucas, did not get the correct diagnosis for his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) disabilities, and thus was not receiving the right services and support from his school. Lucas attended a bilingual immersion program but was not making progress in his reading and writing, in either English and Spanish. He was getting frustrated because he was not able to read and write by himself. Lucas and his family felt hopeless, and so they reached out to us for help. His parents said, "Finally, someone understood our situation." They were happy that our Education Rights Team listened to their story and concerns with patience, respect, and kindness. We helped get the right diagnosis for Lucas, which resulted in better support and services for Lucas. The family now know they are not alone, and they better understand Lucas' needs, and most importantly, what support he was missing to succeed in school.

"We are very grateful for what Legal Aid Society has provided for our son so he can move forward to better his education. Our family does not have the stress of not knowing how to get Lucas help, and our lives have improved so much!"

We provide legal assistance in the following areas:

Special Education I Discipline (expulsion, suspension) I Immigration/Naturalization I SSI I SSDI

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES



Legal Aid Society of San Diego connects people with practical support, trusted information, and resources that improve lives.

Case Management – Helped **343 clients** navigate complex systems, connect with resources, and address barriers to long-term stability.

Hotline – Received nearly **90,000 calls**, offering a trusted point of contact for legal information, referrals, and help with civil legal matters.

Emergency Flex Funds Program – Provided one-time financial assistance in **150 cases** to help individuals overcome an immediate housing crises.

Types of support: Back Rent, Security Deposits, First Month's Rent, Utilities, Groceries, Moving Costs, Temporary Hotel Stays, and Transportation

SYSTEMS CHANGE



Legal Aid Society of San Diego Leads System Change Networks

HEALTH CONSUMER ALLIANCE

The Health Consumer Alliance (HCA) is a statewide network of ten consumer assistance programs operated by community-based legal services organizations across California. Our expert healthcare advocates provide free, confidential legal services to Californians while working collectively to address the systemic barriers that affect thousands when attempting to access healthcare and services across the state.

- **10 direct service providers backed by 3 technical assistance, training and support partners**
- **58 Counties Served**
- **14,069 Individuals Served**
- **$13M Avoided Medical Debt and Costs**

HOUSING JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

The Housing Justice Collaborative is a network of tenant-serving community organizations and legal service provider partners working together since 2020 to efficiently respond to and prevent avoidable evictions in San Diego County. Through education and outreach, rental assistance and legal services, we can keep more San Diego tenants housed.

- **6 Direct Legal Service Providers**
- **Monthly Steering Committee Meetings**
- **23 Education and Outreach events**
- **Quarterly Network Partner Meetings to educate and inform local community-based organizations and government staff**

PRO BONO

440+
Volunteers

36,500+
Service hours

23,500+
People benefited from Pro Se Clinics



Joanna Fox, Breanna Comunale, Joanne Franciscus

2024-2025 Outstanding Service by a Law Firm:
Latham & Watkins LLP

SUPPORTERS

INDIVIDUALS

- Anonymous (x4)
- Anonymous Donor Advised Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego
- Scott Ashline
- Hon. Charles Bell, Jr. and Dr. Lakeya Cherry
- Rob Borthwick and Lee Parnell
- Ryan Caplan
- Cheryl Clark
- Jenna & Bobby Coffman
- Joanna and David Fox
- Joanne Franciscus
- Marcia Gill
- Alejandra Guerrero
- Raechel Kadoya
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- Hon. Margaret M. Mann (ret.) and Michael O'Halloran
- John and Jackie Melbon
- Michael J. Morphew
- Mark and Molly Rackers
- Bill and Dorian Sailer
- Jo Anne SawyerKnoll
- Len Simon
- Pat Wilson and Greg Rose

ORGANIZATIONS

- 211 San Diego
- Anonymous
- Ashline Financial Wealth Management and Insurance Solutions
- Buchalter, APC
- California Bank & Trust
- California Bankruptcy Forum
- Community Health Group
- Cooley LLP
- Covered California
- EBA&M
- Fox Law, APC
- Heinzinger & Pfann
- Latham & Watkins LLP
- Manatt Phelps & Phillips LLP
- Molina Healthcare of California
- Morrison Foerster
- Mutual of America
- San Diego Regional Center
- Sheppard
- Signature Resolution, LLC
- SullivanCurtisMonroe
- The Partner Masters
- The Word & Brown Companies
- UC San Diego Health
- USD School of Law

FOUNDATIONS AND GRANT FUNDERS

- Anonymous (x1)
- CA Department of Health Care Services
- CA Department of Managed Health Care
- CA Department of Social Services
- California ChangeLawyers
- California State Bar Legal Services
- City of Carlsbad
- City of Encinitas
- City of Escondido
- City of San Diego
- City of San Marcos
- County of San Diego
- County of San Diego Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veteran Affairs
- Dr. Bronner's
- Gary and Mary West Foundation
- Gienapp Family Foundation
- Grossmont Healthcare District
- Legal Services Corporation
- Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
- Pinion Street Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund
- Price Philanthropies Foundation
- San Diego Foundation
- The Blackbaud Giving Fund via Sempra Foundation
- The California Endowment
- The Morrison & Foerster Foundation
- Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2025 TOTAL

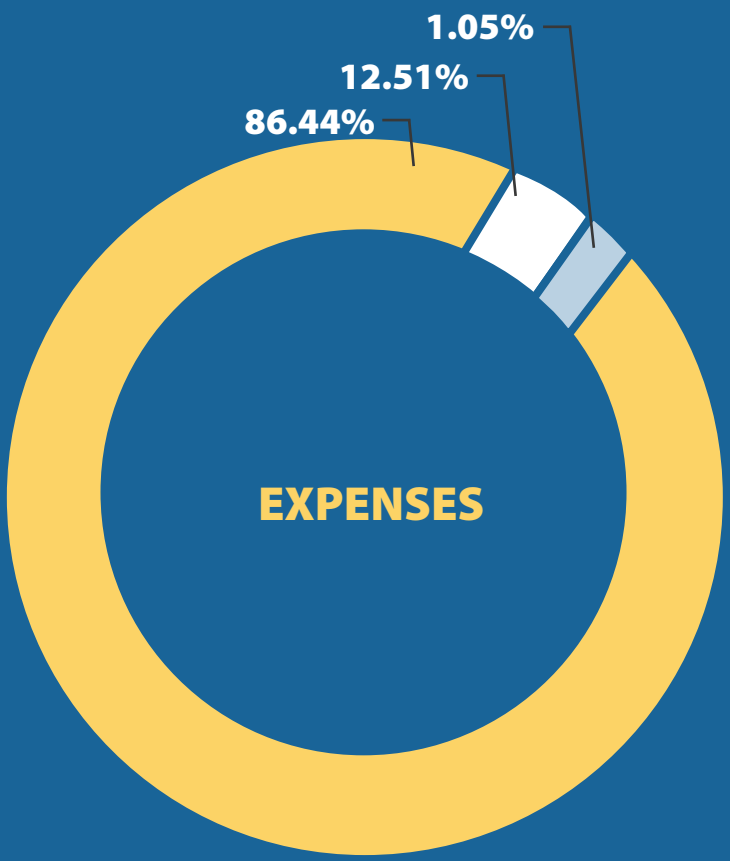


REVENUE

$31,726,853.44

EXPENSES

Program	$26,023,625.47
Admin	$3,766,233.88
Fundraising	$315,358.53
TOTAL	**$30,105,208.88**



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LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO

Mission: The mission of the Legal Aid Society of San Diego is to improve lives by advancing justice through effective, efficient and vigorous legal advocacy, outreach and education.

Vision: A San Diego County where all people enjoy equity and equality allowing them to live and thrive because of our efforts.

lassd.org

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