



Advocates for Basic
Legal Equality, Inc.



Legal Aid of
Western Ohio, Inc.

Together, we do the community justice.

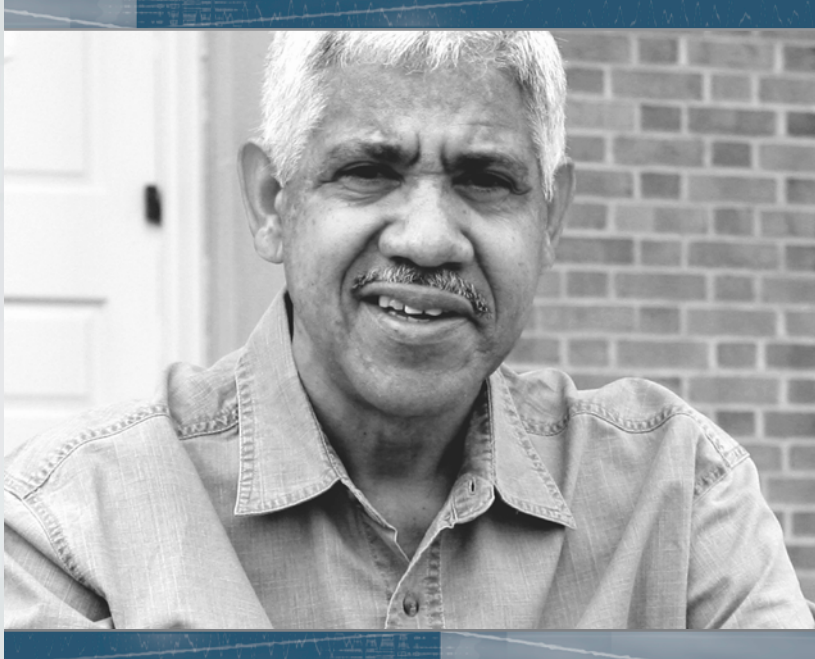
Legal Aid

Report to the Community – 2006

2006 Combined Record of Service

- 34,460 requests for help
- 18,154 open cases
- 18,281 closed cases
- 42,013 individuals benefited across 32 Ohio Counties
- \$4,937,749 total monetary awards for clients*

*Awards and benefits obtained in the areas of child support, spousal support, unemployment compensation, supplemental security income, debt write-off, disability assistance, food stamps, and damages.



Honoring our supporters

Together, with the support of individuals, volunteer attorneys, law firms, corporations, community partners, and other organizations, ABLE and LAWO continue to expand and strengthen their commitment to equal access to justice, serving thousands of low-income people throughout our 32 county service area. Unfortunately, there is still a major gap between the legal needs of low-income people and the legal help that they receive. That is why your support of the legal services LAWO and ABLE provide is so vital to our programs and to the communities we serve.

We support legal aid because we believe it brings great value to our communities. The combined mission of ABLE and LAWO is to improve the lives of low-income people in western Ohio by helping them obtain and maintain the basic necessities of life – housing, food, income, physical safety, and health care. Your support allows us to resolve social problems that impede access to economic opportunity and to level the playing field for our clients.

We hope you will take great pride in being listed as one of those who financially support the efforts of legal aid. This public support of the work of legal services programs means so much to our clients, our staffs, and our boards of trustees. We believe that only by working together can we truly do the community justice.

Thank you.

D. Jeffrey Ireland
Cheryl Washington
2006 Campaign for Equal Justice – Miami Valley

R. Jeffrey Bixler
Steven P. Collier
2006 Campaign for Equal Justice – Northwest Ohio

Legal Aid kept us from being homeless.

Together, we do the community justice.

www.legalaidline.org

“I didn’t just find an attorney, I found a friend.”

For the non profit law firms of ABLE and LAWO, being thought of as a friend to a client who is in crisis is both gratifying and humbling. The attorneys and advocates at LAWO and ABLE closed more than 18,000 cases in 2006. Our work helps families escape domestic violence, avoid homelessness, obtain needed public benefits or health care, access basic support services, and resolve many other problems that threaten the well-being of them and their children.

Our mission is to improve the lives of low-income people in northwest and west central Ohio by helping them obtain and maintain the basic necessities of life – housing, safety, health care, and food – in addition to enhancing family stability and security. We do this by working to resolve a full range of legal problems, including domestic violence, immigration, civil rights, employment, consumer, and family issues, as well as housing and public benefits matters.

Our law firms employ a team of highly committed, experienced attorneys, paralegals, and support personnel. We maintain a strong record of partnering with other non-profit organizations and public service agencies that share our mission.

Most of our clients apply for assistance through Legal Aid Line, our telephone and

Web-based intake and brief service system created to provide streamlined access to legal services for more people. This state-of-the-art system serves as a critical point of access for clients who need free legal help, including advice, brief legal service, and, where applicable, a referral for further representation.

Our work benefits children, seniors, persons with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, immigrants, uninsured families and individuals, families facing foreclosure and eviction, persons moving from welfare to work, homeless children and families, persons with mental illness, residents of nursing homes, and migrant farmworkers – to name a few. Most often, poverty, language and cultural barriers, low education levels, or limited access to human services are issues our clients live with every day.

In addition to providing legal assistance for individual clients, we represent groups of clients with common legal problems when it is the most efficient and cost-effective way to resolve these problems. We conduct community legal education and trainings, including providing *pro se* (self help) materials and guidance for those not facing emergency situations – as well as providing advocacy and assistance on a number of systemic issues affecting our client communities, all of which benefit several thousand poor persons.

Legal Aid Line provided intake, advice, and referral services to 28,618 individuals in 2006. The number of calls and Web applications to Legal Aid Line increased by 3.4 percent from 2005 to 2006.

2006 Significant Accomplishments

A Legally Speaking community education series featuring LAWO and ABLE attorneys was held over a 12-week period in Toledo.

The sessions were free and open to the public and focused on a wide range of legal topics, including predatory lending, family law, housing problems, immigration issues, and government benefits programs.



ABLE and LAWO continued working with community organizations to create a comprehensive health and legal initiative focusing on the well-being of children. The Medical-Legal Partnership for Children is a partnership among ABLE, LAWO, St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center Mercy Children's Hospital (MCH), the University of Toledo Health Science Campus Department of Pediatrics (UT), and Toledo Children's Hospital from ProMedica Health Group. ABLE and LAWO received funding from the D'Youville Foundation in Toledo to support staffing and operating costs for the first two years of the project.

LAWO's Defiance office spearheaded a project to create a Family Justice Center that has centralized a number of services for domestic violence victims in six rural northwest Ohio counties. The Defiance project was selected in 2004 by the Department of Justice as one of 12 new Family Justice

Center sites in the country. LAWO was awarded a grant to provide legal services through the Defiance Family Justice Center project and ABLE is the fiscal agent for the project. In 2006, plans were finalized for the central Family Justice Center Site in Defiance as well as the five satellite sites in each of the other project counties. The grand opening of the Defiance site took place in October of 2006.

ABLE received an Internal Revenue Service grant to operate a Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic, helping the working poor to resolve tax controversies with the IRS and providing tax information to workers for whom English is a second language.

The LAWO Dayton office provided leadership for a statewide Kinship

Care Coalition project to assist grandparents caring for their grandchildren without benefit of formal court custody orders. The project helped implement a new state law that allows grandparents to use simplified forms and procedures to obtain authority to enroll a grandchild in school and to address the child's medical and dental care.

During the first year of the LAWO Civil Legal Assistance Services Project (CLAS), staff assisted more than 500 new clients with cases in the Toledo Municipal Court. LAWO Advocates located in the Toledo Municipal Court building provide a full range of services, including intake and assessment, investigation, negotiation, litigation, appeals, and community legal education. CLAS staff provided assistance in cases including evictions from public and private housing, debt collection, and garnishment issues. The project is supported by funding from a local add-on filing fee implemented by Toledo Municipal Court, Judges, and Toledo City Council.

continued...

2006 Significant Accomplishments

continued...

LAWO staff in Mansfield, along with staff from LAWO's Rural Pro Bono project, established a rent escrow clinic in Mansfield in 2006. The clinic provides *pro se* materials and information to encourage more effective use of Ohio's rent escrow system.

ABLE's Nursing Home Ombudsman/Advocacy Project staff investigated 1,019 complaints throughout its 10-county service area.

In addition, more than 90 people sought assistance on the selection of a long-term care facility, and 57 volunteers spent 2,038 hours visiting nursing homes advocating for residents.

ABLE continues to participate in the Pro Bono Legal Corps (PBLC)

project, a national AmeriCorps project funded through Equal Justice Works.

The AmeriCorps Pro Bono Legal Corps Project continued to increase the number of volunteer law students and attorneys recruited through this program.

Pro bono recruitment in rural counties increased greatly, with several counties now having referral procedures in place and accepting cases. In addition, continuing legal education events for volunteer attorneys were held in Shelby, Richland, Miami, and Allen counties. An Interfaith Legal Clinic was developed and promoted in the Mansfield area, increasing access to legal representation for the low-income community. Individuals were educated about possible solutions to their legal problems at the clinic by receiving individualized advice and counsel from volunteer attorneys.



ABLE received a grant from the Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights Center to continue an immigrant detention project that provides legal rights presentations and legal assistance to immigrants being detained in area jails.

ABLE and LAWO completed the second program year of an Ohio Community Service Council, AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project. Currently, 18 AmeriCorps attorneys and advocates provide legal information, education,

and general assistance to low-income residents and the homeless in an effort to help them retain or secure affordable housing.

The final phase of *ClientsWIN*, our Web-based intake system was launched in early November.

Because of a

newly designed web application, clients now can receive emergency information specific to their problem area and their county following the submission of their application.

ClientsWIN (Client Web Intake Network) is an internal name for this project, which can be accessed by visiting www.legalaidline.org.

This project was funded in part by a major grant from the Stranahan Foundation.

ABLE, LAWO and the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project, in cooperation with the Dayton Bar Association Foundation, held its first Access to Justice Awards Dinner in the Dayton area. The Miami Valley Access to Justice Awards Celebration drew an impressive crowd. The speaker for the event was Linda Greenhouse, *New York Times* Supreme Court correspondent.

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Ensuring safety for the elderly

“Ruth” (*not her real name*) lives in a nursing home. One day while Ruth was showering, her wallet was stolen from her walker. Feeling personally violated, Ruth requested assistance from a volunteer ombudsman who is part of ABLE’s Long Term Ombudsman Program/ Nursing Home Advocacy project. The volunteer ombudsman immediately took action by

informing the facility that a theft had taken place and by helping the client file a police report. An ABLE staff ombudsman then fully investigated the matter and helped the client get her stolen money replaced by the nursing facility. In addition, the ombudsman volunteer continues to visit regularly with Ruth, helping to restore her sense of security in her home.



2006 Significant Accomplishments *continued...*

LAWO continues to be a lead agency for development of the Lucas County Prisoner Re-Entry Project. In 2006, the project served approximately 140 inmates from the Toledo Correctional Institution. Supported by funding from the Ohio State Bar Foundation, the Re-Entry Project helps former inmates resolve family law, medical, housing, and employment problems that otherwise could increase their risk of returning to prison.

In our effort to create a Center for Equal Justice to house our headquarters and to expand our capacity to serve clients, ABLE and LAWO purchased the former Western Union Building located in downtown Toledo on the corner of Huron and Jefferson Streets. Immediately following the purchase, we began to develop a campaign to raise funds for the renovation of the building. The quiet phase of the campaign kicked off in early November.

The Legal Aid Foundation of Western Ohio was established to help provide some critical long-term financial stability for ABLE and LAWO through the creation of endowment and board designated funds.

The Board approved the establishment of an endowment, "The Fund for Equal Justice," at the Toledo Community Foundation. The establishment of this fund will help facilitate an increase in major donations, bequests, and other planned giving gifts. Plans were initiated to establish a similar fund at The Dayton Foundation.



Housing protection for victim of domestic violence

“Sandra” (*not her real name*) lived in a public housing facility under the Section 8 voucher program. The client had recently received a Civil Protection Order (CPO) against her husband that granted her the residence. Her husband, however, refused to move and as a result she was threatened with removal from the program. An LAWO attorney explained to the Housing Authority that her husband

intimated her by carrying a gun around the house. The attorney followed up with a letter and went back to the Housing Authority and provided copies of the protection order and police reports that show the husband was in violation of the CPO. The client was allowed to stay in the home without having a hearing and was reinstated to the Section 8 Voucher program.

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Stopping unlawful garnishments

The LAWO Community Legal Assistance Services (CLAS) project at Toledo Municipal Court received five referrals from a Florida legal aid program over several weeks. The cases involved low-income working mothers who had bought cars in Florida and were having upwards of \$300 per month of their wages garnished after having been sued for a deficiency judgment by a Toledo debt collector. The women, who had never been to Ohio, purchased cars in Florida but returned the cars to the dealer after the cars either broke down or the women lost their jobs. Continued investigation by LAWO attorneys showed that

this same company had sued more than 200 out of state residents in the past year. Further investigation revealed that application of Florida law would have protected the clients' earnings as they were low-income heads of household. The case was brought to the attention of ABLE attorneys, who reviewed the information in collaboration with LAWO attorneys and eventually filed a class action lawsuit against the debt collector, challenging Ohio's jurisdiction. The case was settled prior to the class issue being decided. The settlement included \$90,000 in damages paid to clients.

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Volunteers make a big difference in the lives of those needing civil legal assistance. The following individuals generously contributed their time and talent to assist LAWO and ABLE with their mission of providing equal access to justice. They volunteered as legal interns, externs, paralegals, attorneys, and in other professional capacities.

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Restoring disability benefits

“Steve” (*not his real name*) had received disability benefits since age 11. Steve’s disability was based in part on mental impairments and developmental delay. Steve did not receive his benefits directly – Social Security sent the benefits to Steve’s mother as payee. When Steve was about 35 years old, he began to work at a part-time job at a local store; he did not realize that his mother did not tell Social Security about his employment income. The mother continued to cash Steve’s disability benefits and managed all of Steve’s money. After Steve’s mother died, Social

Security found out about Steve’s part-time employment and claimed that Steve must repay an “overpayment” of \$80,000 before he would be eligible to receive any additional disability benefits. By that time, Steve no longer was able to work and would have faced severe financial difficulties if the disability benefits were terminated. An attorney from LAW0 represented Steve before Social Security. It was determined that Steve was not at fault for the overpayment and his disability benefits were maintained.

Partners in Equal Access to Justice

Legal aid has maintained long standing partnerships with pro bono legal services programs, including the Dayton/Miami Valley Volunteer Lawyer's Project (VLP) and the Toledo Bar Association Pro Bono Legal Services Program. Both programs provide opportunities for attorneys to volunteer their services to low-income people.

In addition to providing direct services on cases, volunteer lawyers also participate in outreach programs, make community education presentations, and co-counsel cases with other volunteers and staff attorneys. Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. (LAWO) provided \$66,000 to the Toledo Bar Association for the Pro Bono Legal Services Program and \$110,992 to the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project. ABLE and LAWO also collaborated with these two programs on fundraising, community legal education, and volunteer lawyer recruitment.

One of the most important benefits of pro bono work is the direct contribution to the principle of justice for all. Last year, the following legal professionals in northwest and west central Ohio willingly and graciously gave their time and expertise to those who could not otherwise afford an attorney. ABLE and LAWO applaud these men and women who agreed to give back to the community so generously.

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Preservation of housing subsidy

“Deidre” (*not her real name*) made ends meet by driving a school bus. Deidre’s income varied depending on the time of year and whether the local school district was in regular session. Deidre thought she had done everything she was required to do to report the seasonal changes in her income, but the

manager for Deidre’s subsidized apartment claimed Deidre had not reported her income changes on time and tried to evict her. An attorney from LAW0 proved that Deidre remained eligible for the housing subsidy and prevented the eviction.

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Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging

Legal assistance to senior citizens in Crawford, Huron, Richland, Seneca, and Wyandot Counties.

PSA 3 Area Agency on Aging

Legal assistance to senior citizens in Allen, Auglaize, Hancock, Hardin, Putnam, Mercer, and Van Wert Counties.

City of Toledo Department of Neighborhoods

Federal Community Development Block Grant funds supporting legal assistance in housing matters for low-income City of Toledo residents.

Clark County Department of Job and Family Services

Clark County Predatory Lending Project for services to victims and potential victims of predatory lending.

Clement O. Miniger Memorial Foundation

Support of the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Lucas County.

County Corps

Legal education, outreach, and assistance to very low-income families, elderly and disabled residents of Montgomery County with housing issues.

Equal Justice Works

AmeriCorps Pro Bono Legal Corps Project to recruit and support volunteer law students and attorneys

Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation

Support of the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Hancock County.

Greene County Department of Job and Family Services

Legal assistance to residents eligible for county assistance.

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights

Immigrant Detention Project to provide legal rights presentations and legal assistance to immigrants being detained in the Seneca County Jail.

The Impact Fund

Litigation expenses for the Clients for the Responsible Destruction of Chemical Weapons of the Miami Valley v. Perma-Fix of Dayton environmental justice case.

Internal Revenue Service

Low Income Taxpayer Clinic to assist people with controversies on federal income tax matters and educate taxpayers for who English is a second language.

Improved Solutions for Urban Systems (ISUS)

Legal assistance to students at the ISUS Manufacturing High School in Dayton

Legal Services Corporation

Support of LAWO region-wide services

Lucas County Mental Health Board

Advocacy on behalf of consumers within the mental health system, including outreach visits to area mental health agencies and community groups

Lucas County Department of Jobs and Family Service

Programs to remove legal barriers to employment and self-sufficiency and to assist seniors and persons with disabilities.

Miami County Department of Job and Family Services

Legal assistance to residents eligible for county assistance.

Miami County Foundation

Continuing Legal Education (CLE) presentations in Miami County.

Montgomery County Human Services Levy

Legal assistance to frail elderly residents.

Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services

Legal assistance to residents eligible for county assistance.

Ohio Coalition on the Education of Children with Disabilities

Community legal education events on the legal needs of children with disabilities

Ohio Community Service Council

AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project to provide legal assistance and advocacy to low-income clients and long-term care residents with legal problems related to the ability to obtain or maintain safe, affordable housing.

Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation

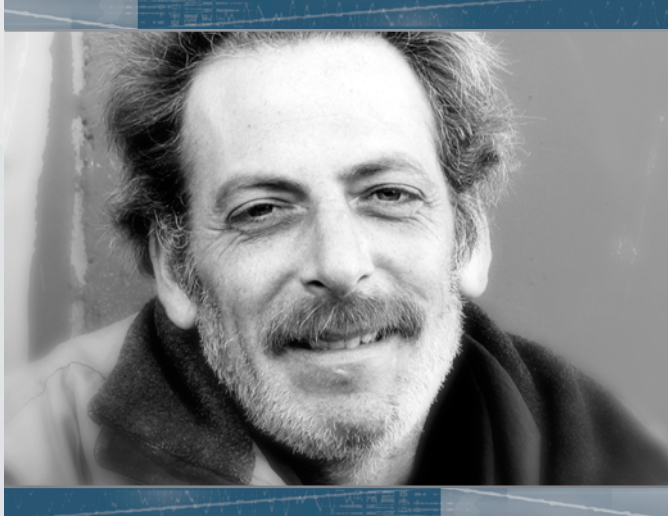
Support of ABLE and LAWO region-wide services, Legal Aid Line, and the migrant farmworker program.

Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services

Legal assistance to victims of domestic violence in LAWO rural counties.

Reynolds & Reynolds Associate Foundation

Support of the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Montgomery County.

**Richland County Foundation**

Support of the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Richland County.

St. Marguerite D'Youville Foundation

Medical-Legal Partnership for Children to provide legal assistance at medical locations to low-income children and families with legal problems affecting child health.

Sandusky Municipal Court

Support of legal assistance to Sandusky residents in housing cases.

Social Security Administration

Benefits planning and information on Social Security Work Incentives.

Stranahan Foundation

Support of the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Lucas County.

Toledo Community Foundation

Support of the Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Lucas County.

Toledo Municipal Court

Community Legal Assistance Services Program to provide legal assistance on-site at the Toledo Municipal Court to individuals with housing and consumer cases.

Turner Foundation

Support of the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Clark County and the Clark County Predatory Lending Project for services to victims and potential victims of predatory lending.

United States Department of Justice

President's Family Justice Center Initiative Legal Assistance to Victims Project – legal assistance to victims of domestic violence and co-located services with shelters and victim assistance agencies.

United Way of Defiance County

Legal assistance to low-income residents of Defiance County.

United Way of Fulton County

Legal assistance to low-income residents of Fulton County

United Way of the Greater Dayton Area

Legal assistance to low-income residents of Montgomery, Greene, and Preble Counties through programs that assist families, the disabled, and the elderly, and provide education on legal rights and responsibilities to youth.

United Way of Greater Lima

Legal assistance to low-income residents of Allen County

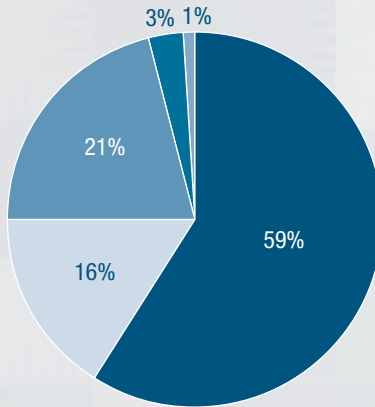
United Way of Greater Toledo

Legal assistance to low-income residents of Lucas, Wood, and Ottawa counties

United Way of Williams County

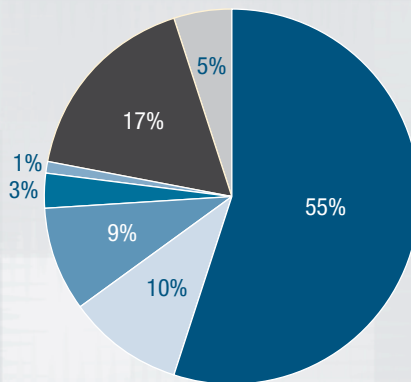
Legal assistance to low-income residents of Williams County

2006 Revenue and Expenditures



Support & Revenue

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| ■ Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF) | \$9,093,708 |
| □ Legal Services Corporation (LSC) | \$2,414,031 |
| ■ Other grants and contracts | \$3,313,947 |
| ■ Fundraising and special event | \$529,774 |
| ■ Miscellaneous interest and other income | \$111,714 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total | \$15,463,174 |



Expenses and Other Expenditures

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| ■ Compensation and benefits | \$8,205,557 |
| □ Contract services | \$1,501,329 |
| ■ Operating costs | \$1,441,110 |
| ■ Travel, Support, and Training | \$509,736 |
| ■ Miscellaneous | \$82,596 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total Expenses | \$11,740,328 |
| | |
| ■ Establishment of Legal Aid Foundation of Western Ohio | |
| – Net Investment | \$2,528,406 |
| □ Purchase of Center for Equal Justice Building and related expenses | \$750,000 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total Expenses and Other Expenditures | \$15,018,734 |



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Western Ohio, Inc.

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Patricia (*not her real name*) was repeatedly beaten by her husband. He beat her throughout her pregnancy, resulting in her son being born disabled. After leaving her husband, Patricia met him in a public place where he grabbed her cell phone headset, knocked her down, and proceeded to stomp on her. In another

incident her husband hit her head against a wall repeatedly until she bled. Her oldest son witnessed this incident. Patricia contacted an LAWO attorney who helped her get a Civil Protection Order and represented her in divorce proceedings.

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Springfield, and Toledo, Ohio



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