

Hope. Dignity. Justice.

Report to the Community 2010



Advocates for Basic
Legal Equality, Inc.



Legal Aid of
Western Ohio, Inc.

Together, we do the community justice.





COMBINED RECORD OF SERVICE 2010

These numbers do not include the additional thousands of people who have benefited from materials and information found on our website, pro bono legal assistance clinics, attendance at community legal education presentations and trainings, continuing legal education presentations for lawyers, and outreach visits to homeless and domestic violence shelters, senior centers, health clinics, nursing homes, and migrant labor camps.

31,616 requests for help
21,637 cases worked on
21,663 closed cases
58,730 persons helped
\$13,297,533* total monetary
awards for clients

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

“It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.”

–Robert F. Kennedy

2010 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

ABLE

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc

LAWO

Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc.

When many of us need to seek legal assistance, we simply contact an attorney. Thousands of people in western Ohio, however, cannot afford such assistance or do not know how to navigate our system of justice. This is where ABLE and LAWO can provide the legal representation we all deserve.

Our work brings hope, dignity and justice to low-income people by providing them with access to justice that ensures their basic needs are met. Our advocates are dedicated to empowering people to rebuild their lives and become independent and self-sufficient. The work of ABLE and LAWO combines community outreach, education, litigation, and legislative advocacy.

Each year, the number of cases in our community involving domestic violence, child custody, housing, employment, health care, and other critical civil matters continues to rise. This is why your commitment to equal justice is so important. We are fortunate to have so many of you who support our work. We can all take great pride in the high quality legal representation LAWO and ABLE provide to poor and at-risk families and groups.

This past year our advocates approached their work with the urgency and intensity necessitated by the dire circumstances of our clients and community. With YOUR help, we will continue these efforts and work with our clients to ensure that their fight against poverty, injustice, and inequality will be heard and that they will not be an afterthought in the wake of the nation’s economic recovery.

Together, we are making a significant difference in the lives of our clients and our community.

Together, we do the community justice.



LAWO ADVOCACY

Advocating for the Frail Elderly

LAWO provides a wide variety of services for the frail elderly in Montgomery County to help individuals live safely and independently in their communities. Our advocates provided 216 frail elderly individuals with legal assistance through funds from the Montgomery County Human Services Levy. We obtained more than \$77,000 in monetary awards and benefits for clients in 2010. Through education, referrals, policy advocacy, and the representation of individuals, LAWO successfully addressed the needs of frail elderly clients in such critical areas as domestic violence, elder abuse, financial exploitation, housing, consumer fraud, debt collection, access to benefits (including Medicaid, Medicare, and retirement benefits), and the preparation of advance directives for health care, and other documents. In appropriate circumstances, LAWO also provided advice regarding guardianship issues. LAWO is the only law firm that provides comprehensive free legal services with the availability of home visits for Montgomery County residents who are 60 years of age or older.

Protecting Survivors of Domestic Violence

LAWO's nationally recognized Family Justice Center Project (FJC) serves domestic violence clients in 21 rural counties. The Family Justice Center project has developed six rural "one-stop" service locations for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Shelters, medical and social service agencies, law enforcement agencies, and other government and non-profit organizations collaborate in the project.

Expanding Capacity through Pro Bono

LAWO's Private Attorney Involvement Project manages monthly community legal clinics in Hancock County, staffed by volunteer attorneys and paralegals from the Marathon Petroleum Company legal department. The project has developed a model to train and support corporate pro bono attorneys for expanded pro bono availability in underserved rural counties. The project has targeted three initial areas of need: private landlord/tenant cases, simple probate matters, and advance directives.

Helping Provide a Fresh Start

LAWO expanded its prisoner re-entry coalition activities in Toledo. LAWO partners with several community organizations to assist re-entering prisoners with legal issues focused on housing access and barriers to employment. As part of the coalition, LAWO has recruited private attorneys and students from the University of Toledo College of Law to assist with the clinics and follow-up work. We also have established a program with the Toledo Municipal Court through which the Court conducts hearings via video conference to identify and dispose of pending charges that could lead to the issuance of a warrant on the client's release from prison. This program allows an inmate to be released free of any other pending charges and to start fresh.



PROTECTING AN ELDERLY RESIDENT'S INCOME

Georgia became worried when she was told that she had very little money left in her Personal Needs Account (PNA) at the nursing home where she lived. When a volunteer ombudsman came to visit, she mentioned her concerns. The volunteer contacted a staff ombudsman who met with the resident and together they reviewed her account statements. They discovered that the facility had applied a \$90 Veterans benefit toward care costs several times and that Georgia was not receiving her monthly \$40 PNA. ABLE's staff ombudsman then scheduled a meeting with the facility business manager where it was determined that the \$40 PNA had not been placed in the client's account since it was opened in 2008 and that the Veterans benefit was used several times to cover her cost of care. The facility agreed to reimburse Georgia the \$500 she was owed. Today, Georgia's finances are in good order and she is free of this worry.

Licensed volunteer ombudsmen contributed nearly 3,000 hours during their more than 1,620 advocacy visits and spent nearly 100 hours working with staff on more than 68 case investigations. The program addressed issues of wrongful discharge and evictions from facilities, unattended or unnoticed symptoms, denial of a resident's right to exercise choice, denial of civil and consumer rights, misadministration of medications, incidence of accidents or injuries of unknown origin, lack of dignity and respect by staff, and insufficient care plans. Staff and volunteers work with residents, their families and the facilities to resolve and correct these complaints.

In 2010, ABLE's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program addressed more than 680 complaints and worked on more than 380 cases.



ABLE ADVOCACY

Aiding Urban Renewal Through Urban Land Reuse

During the first year of an Urban Land Reuse and Affordable Housing Development Project, an Equal Justice Works Fellow, working with others across the state, successfully lobbied the Ohio House and Senate to extend land banking legislation to cities like Toledo and Dayton. The new statute authorizes Lucas and Montgomery Counties to create land reutilization corporations and implement land banks. Land banking can be used to create affordable housing and aid urban renewal efforts by gaining control of otherwise unmarketable vacant properties, creating a market for both for- and non-profit developers to create safe, sanitary affordable housing, while reducing factors that add to crime, property devaluation, and neighborhood population loss. ABLE is now an integral part of the Lucas County Land Bank Implementation Committee, helping to shape the policies of the new LRC and advocate for the creation of new affordable housing opportunities. Collaboration and education among community stakeholders continues in order to promote the use of innovative legal tools for land reutilization and neighborhood revitalization, including projects such as urban agriculture and the installation of rain gardens that will help build healthy, sustainable neighborhoods.

Fighting for Health Care Services for Children in Poverty

This past year, advocates made significant progress in a case challenging the state's failure to fully implement Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment services (EPSDT) under Ohio's Medicaid Program. A settlement of several of the claims in the case of *G.D. v. Riley*, has resulted in the entry of a consent decree that will affect thousands of Medicaid eligible children in Ohio. The consent decree provides for system-wide reform in the administration and provision of the program.

The new requirements (based on recommendations by national experts) are essential to allow for the thousands of Medicaid-eligible children and their families to understand the availability of this critical health care program.

Establishing Relocation Rights for Public Housing Residents

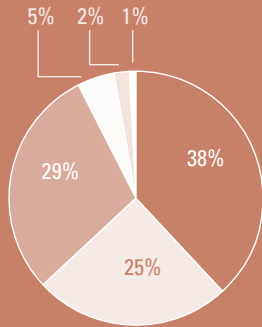
ABLE filed a complaint in 2009 alleging that the relocation process the Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority (DMHA) employed to relocate residents affected by the demolition of the Cliburn Manor public housing development violates the Ohio Relocation Statute. DMHA gave residents a choice between relocating to another DMHA development or opting for a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. One resident opted for the Section 8 voucher and an opportunity to relocate in a more desirable area, but she was unable to locate an apartment that met the housing quality standards or a landlord willing to accept the voucher offered by DMHA. The Ohio Relocation Statute requires a displacing agency to conduct proper planning to ensure that residents forced to relocate will receive comparable housing. The agency also is required to provide rental assistance to residents for up to forty-eight months to assist in finding comparable housing. The Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas dismissed the complaint, finding that federal law preempted the Ohio Relocation Statute. On appeal, ABLE persuaded the Court of Appeals that the federal statute does not preempt the state relocation laws. The ruling has significant implications state-wide as residents who are faced with involuntary displacement by a housing authority can claim the protections of Ohio's relocation rights and housing authorities will be required to take steps to ensure comparable housing options.



ABLE AND LAWO

2010 Operating Revenues and Expenditures

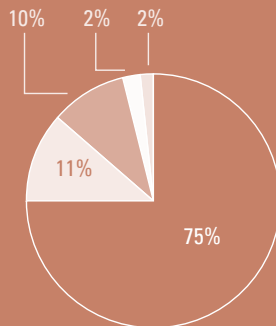
Support & Revenue



\$4,632,298	Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF)
\$3,014,990	Legal Services Corporation (LSC) (LAWO)
\$3,548,966	Other grants and contracts
\$234,696	Fundraising and special event
\$89,599	Miscellaneous income from investments
\$575,252	Application of reserves and transfers from Legal Aid Foundation of Western Ohio

\$12,095,801 Total

Expenses & Expenditures



\$9,096,654	Compensation and benefits
\$1,368,380	Contract services
\$1,165,153	Operating costs
\$276,899	Travel, Support, and Training
\$188,715	Miscellaneous

\$12,095,801 Total

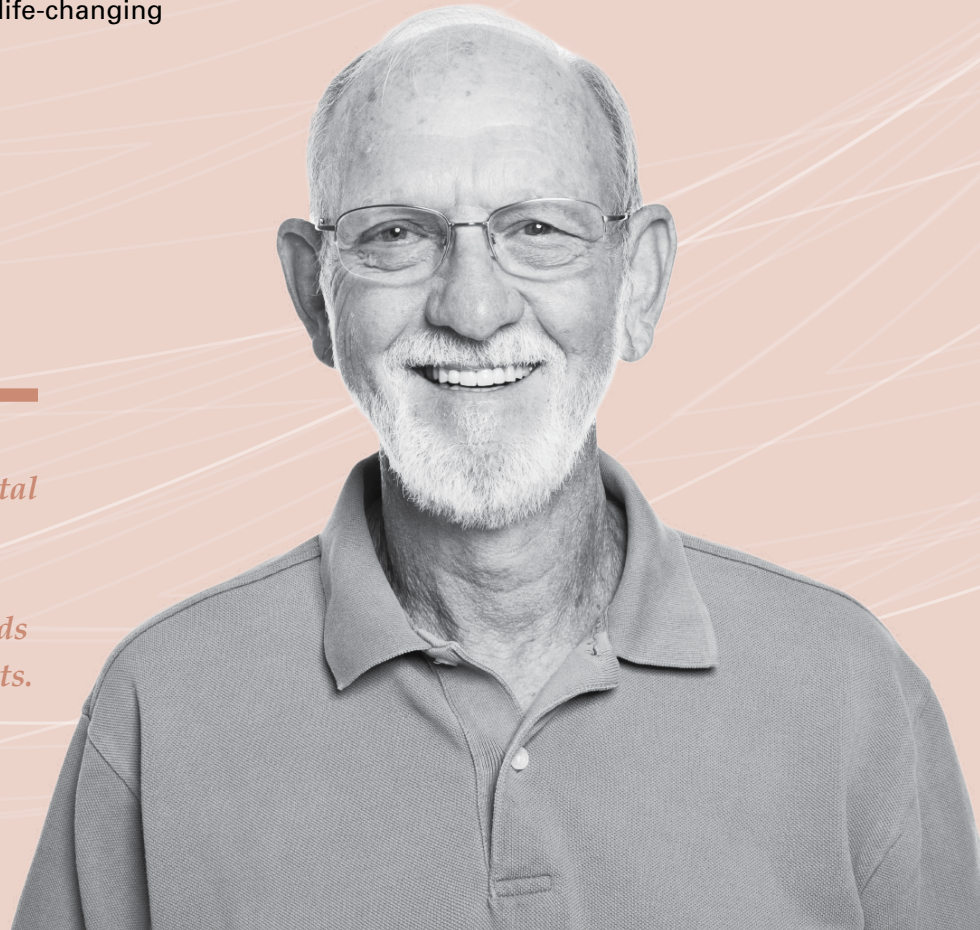
This report is related to ABLE and LAWO's operations budget and does not include revenue or expenses related to the Campaign for the Center for Equal Justice or the Legal Aid Foundation of Western Ohio.

HELPING ACCESS PUBLIC BENEFITS

Ed is a senior who needed help filing his taxes. He attended a free clinic where he met with an ABLÉ Mobile Benefit Bank AmeriCorps staff member. The staff member suggested that Ed was likely eligible for nutrition assistance benefits available for low income seniors. After assisting Ed in completing an application for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps), a Legal Needs Assessment was also completed. Several months later the staff member met Ed again at a community clothing drive. He was now not only receiving SNAP, but the Area Office on Aging had connected him with a program that was providing him with fresh meat and vegetables twice a month. He had also been referred to a free dental and health clinic that he was eligible for because of his veteran status. Through his legal assessment he filed an application for assistance to resolve a problem he was experiencing with his landlord. ABLÉ lawyers also resolved this issue for him. Ed's encounter with the Mobile Benefit Bank has been a life-changing experience.

The Mobile Benefit Bank Project continues to be extremely successful in identifying both benefits and legal needs for clients in a holistic approach to client service delivery in Lucas County. By the end of 2010, 1,017 clients were enrolled in public benefit programs, providing assistance to 1,803 household members. HEAP, prescription assistance, Healthy Start, Healthy Families, and Medicaid assistance are among the benefits procured. The success of the project in 2010 led to an increase in funding from the Toledo Community Foundation for the 2010/2011 grant year, including an expansion of the project to Wood County.

The Mobile Benefit Bank successfully obtained supplemental nutrition assistance for clients totaling more than \$1 million. More than \$190,000 in tax refunds have also been obtained for clients.



2010 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL JUSTICE MIAMI VALLEY

*Turning lives
around through
equal justice.*

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Anonymous

Leadership -

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Foundation
Sebaly Shillito + Dyer

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Julia A. Turner
Wayne E. Waite
Stephen A. Weigand
Abigail K. White

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Gilvary**
Robert J. Brown

**In honor of Jim
McCarthy & Anita
Schmaltz**
Diane E. Citrino

**In memory of Chief
Justice Thomas J.
Moyer**
Charles J. Faruki

**In memory of David
Orlins**
Hon. Jeffrey E. Froelich

In memory of Irv Saul
Gary J. Leppla

**In honor of Frank A.
Irizarry**
Scott A. Livingston

**In memory of Elizabeth
Gellman**
Hon. Walter Rice &
Mag. Bonnie Rice

**In memory of J.
Gordon Rudd Sr.**
Susan Rudd
Jan Rudd-Goenner

**In honor of ABLE Board
Members**
Joseph Tafelski

**In memory of Mary
Catherine Tracy**
Louis E. Tracy



CHANGING A CHILD'S FUTURE

Melissa was referred to the Medical Legal Partnership for Children (MLPC) for assistance with getting her son Richie back in school. Richie has juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and spondylitis.

At the time of referral, Richie had been out of school for weeks because he was no longer able to climb the three flights of stairs to reach his classroom. Melissa's MLPC attorney obtained documentation regarding necessary accommodations for Richie from his doctors and advocated for proper accommodations and services at an Individualized Education Plan meeting. As a result, Richie was placed at an accessible school and is now receiving physical therapy and accommodations, including home schooling when he is physically unable to attend school.

Richie is prospering in school and is receiving an appropriate education that accommodates his disability.

Pediatricians recognize that the health status of their small patients is often negatively affected by social and environmental conditions that medical care alone cannot remedy. Proactive legal assistance in a medical setting helps alter the vicious cycle that keeps families in poverty. An attorney can help a family negotiate with landlords, public benefits providers, schools, and others to ensure access to safe housing, financial support, medical care, and an education. Since its inception, the Medical Legal Partnership for Children has received more than 1,000 referrals and has accepted hundreds of cases for ongoing representation, assisting pediatric and obstetric patients and their families with various legal matters, including obtaining child social security benefits, preserving affordable housing, obtaining appropriate special education services, obtaining custody for relative caregivers, and resolving consumer matters.

In 2010, the MLPC handled 168 cases, assisting nearly 500 persons and obtaining more than \$100,000 in benefits for clients.



2010 CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL JUSTICE

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Save a Home, Save a Family

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Meredith Mercurio
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Meghan Anderson
Roth
Denise Ford Saxon
Sarah K. Skow
Jason Van Dam
J. Michael Vassar
George C. Ward
Lucinda Weller

Pacesetter - \$5,000+

Philip McWeeny
Nellie F. Bash for
Charities
Owens Illinois Fund
of the Charities
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Leadership -

\$2,000 to \$4,999
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Cooper & Walinski, LPA
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Terrell Allen
Robison, Curphey &
O'Connell
Scott J. Savage
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Kendrick, LLP

Sustaining -

\$1,000 to \$1,999
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R. Jeffrey and Kathleen
R. Bixler
Bunda, Stutz & DeWitt,
PLL
David J. Coyle
Nicholas J. Cron

Dana Corporate
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Dr. and Mrs. Lachman
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James & Joni M.
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David W. Zoll

Advocate - \$100 to \$299

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Alfred Albright, Jr.
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SAVING A HOMEOWNER WITH A DISABILITY FROM FORECLOSURE

Sixty-two year old Clara was facing foreclosure when she became unable to work due to heart disease. When she turned to Legal Aid for assistance, her attorney helped her present medical documentation to seek disability benefits from the Social Security Administration, and at the same time collaborated with a foreclosure defense attorney to keep the bank from selling her home. The disability benefits were approved just in time to prevent foreclosure, and Clara continues to live in her home.

In addition, Clara's neighborhood does not have an abandoned property and she continues to pay her property taxes.

In the last year, Legal Aid Line processed 1,310 foreclosure-related intakes from people requesting assistance with foreclosures. More than 800 foreclosure cases have been opened this year, with casework ranging from providing brief advice and resource information to full litigation representation.

Since April 1, 2009, ABLE and LAWO attorneys have handled 1,089 foreclosure cases from throughout the 32 county service area.



PARTNERS IN EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE

ABLE and LAWO have maintained long standing partnerships with pro bono legal services programs, including the Greater Dayton/Miami Valley Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) and the Toledo Bar Association Pro Bono Legal Services Program. Both programs provide opportunities for attorneys and other legal professionals to volunteer their services to low-income people by providing free legal assistance.

As LAWO and ABLE faced critical budget shortfalls in 2010, the ability of pro bono programs to secure volunteer lawyers became more important than ever. The time, hard work, and dedication of local volunteer attorneys made it possible to provide legal assistance to even more clients. Pro bono attorneys help fill the gaps for those who would otherwise go unrepresented in legal matters that affect their lives and the lives of their families.

Volunteer lawyers also participate in outreach programs, make community education presentations, and co-counsel cases with other volunteers and legal aid staff attorneys. LAWO is the major funder of pro bono programs in western Ohio.

An important benefit of pro bono work is the direct contribution an attorney can make to the principle of justice for all. In 2010, the following legal professionals in northwest and west central Ohio willingly and generously gave their time and expertise to those who could not otherwise afford an attorney. ABLE and LAWO applaud these women and men who agreed to give back to their community.

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FIGHTING POVERTY BY STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Minority business owner Cherie designs and creates jewelry for children. Recently she became worried about the possibility of lead in the materials she purchases from her suppliers. With concerns about her own liability for the materials, Cherie knew she needed to speak with an attorney. Without money to spare, she wasn't sure how to hire a lawyer she could afford and trust when she heard about a small business legal clinic sponsored by legal aid and an organization that mentors small business owners. A pro bono attorney at the clinic advised Cherie on some important next steps for her business, including investigating liability insurance. Having to rely on her suppliers to be truthful about what is contained in the products they sell puts Cherie and her business in a vulnerable position. In addition, her pro bono attorney made some recommendations that helped Cherie realize that she has to hire an attorney if she is to keep up on the changing laws regarding lead levels in jewelry. She also received advice on a business plan and budget. Cherie now feels more confident about working with an attorney to grow her small business and to help with her success.

A community development initiative that serves entrepreneurs and small business owners in and around Lucas County, the Microenterprise Legal Assistance Project is designed to facilitate economic empowerment in low income and minority populations in Northwest Ohio. The project works to bring wealth to communities, creating jobs, and broadening economic equality for historically disadvantaged groups. With free legal services for entrepreneurs who cannot afford an attorney, the program has held a variety of community based small business legal clinics, provided extended representation by an attorney at ABLE or by a qualified pro bono attorney. This project is staffed by an Equal Justice Works Fellow, sponsored by the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, and funded in part by the Stranahan Foundation.

Implemented in 2010, the Microenterprise Legal Assistance Project is uniquely suited to help build assets in neighborhoods hit the hardest by the economic downturn.



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Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.

Supports advocating for residents of nursing homes, adult care facilities, and consumers receiving in-home care services through the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

City of Toledo Department of Neighborhoods

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Equal Justice Works

Support for Attorney Fellows working in the areas of neighborhood revitalization and foreclosure prevention and traditional Equal Justice Works Fellows for the Land Reuse and Revitalization Project and the MicroEnterprise Legal Assistance Project.

Internal Revenue Service

Low Income Taxpayer Clinic to assist people with controversies on federal income tax matters and provide outreach and education on tax issues to English as a Second Language taxpayers.

National Center on Elder Abuse

Support for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to coordinate a multidisciplinary elder abuse prevention task force in Lucas County.

Northwest Ohio Community Shares

Operating support through workplace giving.

Ohio Attorney General

Victims of Crime Act funding to provide services to crime victims residing in nursing homes in ten northwest Ohio counties.

Stranahan Foundation

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

Toledo Community Foundation

Support for the Mobile Benefit Bank pilot project and the Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Ohio State Legal Services Association

Support for preforeclosure legal assistance to homeowners.

LAWO

Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2

Legal assistance to senior citizens in Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, and Shelby counties.

Area Agency on Aging - Ohio District 5

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

Area Agency on Aging, PSA 3

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

City of Dayton

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

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

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to support legal assistance to victims of domestic violence in Lucas County.



The Findlay/Hancock County Bar Association

Support for staffing of the Findlay satellite office and the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Project in Hancock County.

Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation

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

Legal Services Corporation

Support of LAWO area-wide services.

Lucas County Department of Jobs and Family Service

Program to remove legal barriers to employment and self-sufficiency and provides services to seniors and persons with disabilities.

Miami County Department of Job and Family Services

Legal assistance to residents eligible for County assistance.

Montgomery County

Support for legal assistance to frail elderly individuals in Montgomery County.

Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to support legal assistance to domestic violence victims in most LAWO counties.

Ohio Poverty Law Center

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to support legal assistance to victims of domestic violence.

St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center

Support for the Medical Legal Partnership for Children through the Abandoned Infants Assistance Project and Empowering Families Project.

Sandusky Municipal Court

Support for legal assistance to Sandusky residents.

Springfield Foundation

Support of the Clark County Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention services to homeowners facing foreclosure.

Toledo Municipal Court

Civil Legal Assistance Services Project to provide legal assistance on site at the court to individuals with housing and consumer cases.

Turner Foundation

Support for legal assistance to Clark County residents with predatory lending and foreclosure issues and support for the AmeriCorps Homelessness Prevention and Housing Opportunity Program in Clark County.

United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women

Rural Domestic Violence grant to provide legal assistance to victims in 21 rural counties through the Northwest Ohio Family Justice Center.

United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women

Legal Assistance for Victims Project to provide legal assistance to victims of domestic violence in 21 rural counties.

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, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

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 and benefits screenings for Lucas County residents.

United Way of Williams County

Legal assistance to low-income residents of Williams County.

LAWO via ABLE**Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.**

Legal assistance to senior citizens in ten counties of LAWO's service area.

Equal Justice Works

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

LAWO and ABLE Combined**Mental Health and Recovery Services
Board of Lucas County**

Advocacy on behalf of consumers within the mental health system who are seeking government benefits.

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 area-wide services, Legal Aid Line, and the migrant program as well as support for the ABLE Immigrant Detention Project and the Save the Dream foreclosure prevention project, the Equal Justice Works Fellowship, and Equal Justice Works Recovery Fellows.



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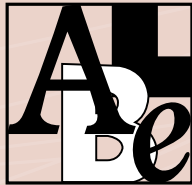


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