



INDIANAPOLIS LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Removing Obstacles.
Providing Hope.





- ★ Sheila, a grandmother, came to Legal Aid seeking custody of her daughter's two children by two separate, absentee, fathers. Sadly, the children's mother had been diagnosed with terminal cancer with only weeks to live. The mother's dying wish was for the children to stay together in the care of their grandmother. Accomplishing this goal required a Legal Aid attorney to intervene in two separate custody cases. Our attorney obtained custody for Sheila allowing the children to remain in their school, receive medical attention, and preserve the stability of the children's lives.*



INDIANAPOLIS LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged individuals and families in Central Indiana *for over 75 years.*

The Indianapolis Legal Aid Society ("Legal Aid") is dedicated to ensuring that qualified low-income persons living in Central Indiana have immediate and direct access to quality legal assistance for civil disputes at no cost.

We protect families and individuals in civil disputes and remove barriers that prevent vulnerable populations from becoming productive citizens. When all hope is lost, we give low-income individuals a voice in their own legal matters and deliver hope to vulnerable Hoosiers when they need it most.

Legal Aid treats clients with dignity and respect afforded clients of a private law firm. Our well-defined purpose is, and always has been, to serve all who qualify. Without any ideological, governmental, and sectarian encumbrances, our staff lawyers are able to maintain a clear focus on Legal Aid's mission.

Legal Aid differs from other legal service providers in Central Indiana in that

- ★ *Low-income clients are able to meet with an attorney in approximately three business days, earlier than if they had made an appointment at a private law firm; and*
- ★ *It is the largest organization in Indiana devoted solely to providing civil legal assistance to persons of limited means.*





A HISTORY OF CARING

Fulfilling a Need & Building upon a Reputation




In 1941, The Indianapolis Foundation, the Law School (Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law), the Indianapolis Bar Association, and the Community Chest (United Way of Central Indiana) founded Legal Aid to provide free, non-fee generating civil legal assistance for low-income individuals unable to afford an attorney.

Legal Aid was the first organization of its kind in the State of Indiana, and it has operated continuously since its incorporation, compiling a record of continued growth and provision of quality civil legal assistance to low-income persons in Central Indiana.

Legal Aid has served over one-half million citizens in Central Indiana since 1941.

Wise stewardship for over 75 years by Legal Aid's board of directors, its officers, managing counsel, and dedicated and caring service by its attorneys and support staff have continued the growth of this valuable community asset.



“My Legal Aid attorney was extremely helpful in giving me as many options as possible for the best outcome for my situation.”



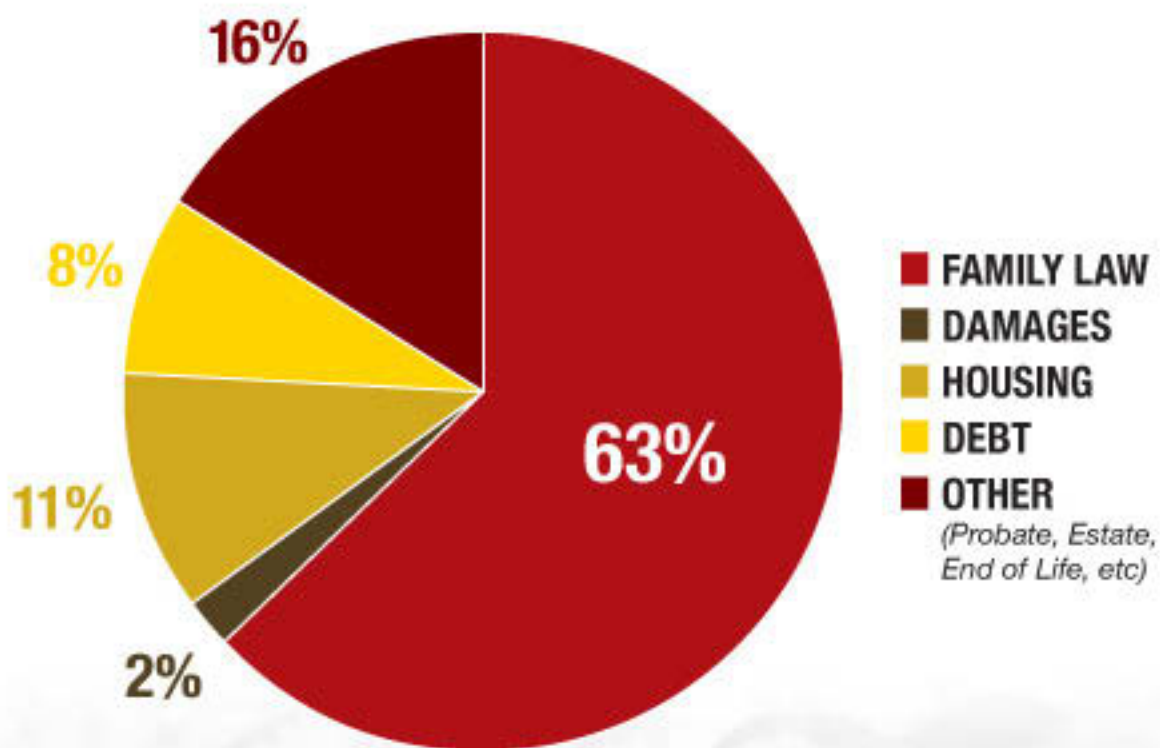
THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Legal Aid clients include women in need of protective orders for themselves and their children; victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, and child abuse or neglect; individuals and couples wishing to adopt; elderly individuals needing to resolve housing issues so they can remain in their own home; grandparents wishing to properly care for their grandchildren through guardianships; and ex-offenders seeking successful re-entry into the community.

Legal Aid attorneys meet face-to-face with all clients. Our attorneys use a holistic approach and work tirelessly to educate and advise clients and generate solutions. Oftentimes we are able to solve a client's problem within the initial meeting.

With the increasing numbers of cases involving housing, particularly safe housing for seniors, expungements for ex-offenders, domestic violence, and child guardianships, Legal Aid has created programs to meet the needs of these individuals.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



Cassie and her mother were in jeopardy of losing their home. Nineteen-year-old Cassie sought assistance for her 59-year-old mother who had recently suffered multiple debilitating strokes and a massive heart attack leaving her completely incapacitated. Legal Aid assisted Cassie in obtaining guardianship of her mother. Once guardianship was established, our attorney helped Cassie apply for Social Security and other disability programs for her mother. Our work enabled Cassie and her mother to remain in the home, allowing Cassie to supervise her mother's care.



Orville H. Copsey Safe Housing Initiative



An elderly couple, Sam and Helen, did not have enough income to pay both their monthly bills and their medical bills. Our staff investigated public benefit options, advised the couple about applying for these benefits, and developed payment plan options with other creditors. These steps by the Legal Aid attorney allowed Sam, a proud Veteran, and Helen, to remain in their home.

The Orville H. Copsey Safe Housing Initiative is an all-encompassing project to help senior and mentally and physically disabled adults remain in their homes. Legal Aid provides legal resolutions and obtains services to repair homes threatened with condemnation by the Marion County Health Department. These services strengthen neighborhoods by keeping houses occupied, repaired, and on the tax rolls.

Domestic Violence Program



The Legal Aid Domestic Violence Program's purpose is to prevent future family violence. It provides free legal assistance and victims' rights education to victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, and/or child abuse to help victims achieve safety and stability. Legal Aid also offers assistance in civil court proceedings and referrals to partner agencies where appropriate.



Children's Guardianship Initiative

The Legal Aid Children's Guardianship Program works with the Marion County Probate Court, Marion County Public Defender and Department of Child Services to keep children out of the juvenile court and foster care system. Helping family members obtain guardianship of minor children improves children's lives and enables their parents to focus on getting the help they need.

Legal Aid is the only legal services organization in Indianapolis that handles children's guardianships.

"Legal Aid has been a godsend for me. I'm a single mother working full-time and going to school. I met with a few attorneys about guardianship of my niece's baby, and it was going to cost me thousands of dollars. I'm so thankful that Legal Aid is here to help me."





Re-Entry Program



Tom came to our office seeking an expungement of his one conviction, a B felony, for burglary from the 80's when he was in his late teens. Tom began hanging around with some older guys, and they broke into someone's home. He stole golf clubs, but the others took money and jewelry. Tom spent three years in prison. He has never been arrested again. Upon his release, Tom managed to get a job in a warehouse where he worked for 16 years. The company was acquired and conducted background checks on all employees. Tom lost his job because the acquiring company prohibited employing anyone convicted of a felony. After losing his job, Tom was unable to find work due to his background. While our attorney was researching his criminal case, Tom interviewed for a job at a warehouse where the manager was a friend of his former supervisor. Based on Tom's years of experience and his former supervisor's glowing recommendation, Tom was hired. With the help of his Legal Aid attorney, the court granted Tom's expungement, and his supervisor promoted him to a management position.

When ex-offenders return to the community, they are often discriminated against because of their prior arrests and convictions. This discrimination occurs in several aspects of the ex-offender's life including hiring and promotions, qualifying for affordable housing or securing a mortgage, and the inability to obtain certain licenses to advance careers. It can even prevent an ex-offender from volunteering at their child's school due to a prior felony, regardless of how long ago that felony may have occurred.

Legal Aid's Re-Entry Program provides education, advocacy, legal advice, and representation to ex-offenders, thereby helping remove barriers to successful re-entry.

Peace Resolution Center



Legal Aid's Peace Resolution Center offers free mediation services in family law. Eligible cases include divorce, paternity, custody, parenting time, child support, grandparent visitation, and other family law matters. In addition, the Center holds conflict resolution courses to educate parents and provide them with tools to have productive, meaningful discussions with co-parents regarding their children.

Lawyer Referral Service & Pro Bono Lawyer Panel



Legal Aid's Lawyer Referral Service program was created for those lawyers wishing to serve low-income individuals (the working poor) on a sliding-fee scale. These are clients who do not meet Legal Aid's financial criteria. The program offers comprehensive referral services to lawyers, and all referrals are pre-screened by Legal Aid staff attorneys.

Lawyers interested in serving on the Pro Bono Panel must be admitted to practice in the State of Indiana. Legal Aid provides professional liability insurance at no cost to the pro-bono attorney.



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Legal Aid receives referrals from over 50 community agencies, and the list continues to grow. We frequently receive referrals from other legal service organizations to advise and represent clients in complex cases.



Fred was cited by the Marion County Health Department for roach infestation and general unsanitary conditions in his home. His wife of 55 years was placed in a nursing home causing Fred to become depressed. He adopted a total of 13 stray cats as a way to deal with his grief. The stress of missing his wife led to health problems resulting in lung cancer. Fred no longer had the energy to do anything around the house. The Health Department reached out to Legal Aid and NeighborLink for assistance. This collaborative effort helped Fred remain in his home. NeighborLink found services to help clean Fred's house and Legal Aid filed the necessary court documents allowing Fred to remain in his home.



INDIANAPOLIS LEGAL AID SOCIETY OUTCOMES & IMPACT

With an operating budget of \$1,000,000, Legal Aid receives over 10,000 requests annually for help from low-income individuals. Our attorneys are able to provide immediate, direct civil legal assistance at no charge to individuals with incomes of less than 125% of the federal poverty guideline levels. They interview, counsel, and represent approximately 5,000 clients annually and are in court two to three times per day for an average cost of under \$200 per case. Legal Aid attorneys not only focus on the legal aspect of a client's situation but ensure local social and governmental services are made available to clients.





JOIN THE CHALLENGE

Improve Access to Legal Services

Help Legal Aid change – and save – the lives of disadvantaged individuals and families in Indianapolis and surrounding counties.

Our major gift society, Legal Aid Leadership Circle, and our planned giving group, Legal Aid Legacy Fund, are ways you can leave a lasting legacy while investing in Legal Aid's vital services to the community.

Becoming a **Leadership Circle** donor means we never have to turn away a client due to their financial circumstances and allows Legal Aid to provide and expand upon programs and services that are desperately needed by our clients. Nearly 90% of your donation goes directly toward providing legal access to low-income individuals.

As a **Legacy Fund** donor, your gift will secure the future of Legal Aid in Central Indiana. Adding Indianapolis Legal Aid Society to your will is one of the easiest and most important gifts you can make. It is a gift to the community that will benefit generations to come.

Your Philanthropic Investment will Help:

- ★ *Families stay together;*
- ★ *Children live in a safe and stable environment;*
- ★ *Seniors and mentally and physically disabled adults remain in their homes;*
- ★ *Ex-offenders live productive and valuable lives; and*
- ★ *Strengthen communities throughout Central Indiana.*

When you support Legal Aid, you empower individuals and families. Take advantage of this opportunity and make a profound impact in the community by investing in Legal Aid.

Find out how you can support Legal Aid by contacting
Indianapolis Legal Aid Society CEO & General Counsel:

John Floreancig at:
johnf@indylas.org or 317.217.5345



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INDIANAPOLIS LEGAL AID SOCIETY

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Legal Aid, providing free civil legal assistance to individuals and families with incomes of less than 125% of the federal poverty guideline levels within Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, Morgan, and Shelby counties.

