

COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES
is still here for **YOU!**



Community Legal Services of Philadelphia

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES 2020



OUR MISSION IS TO FIGHT POVERTY, CHALLENGE SYSTEMS THAT PERPETUATE INJUSTICE, AND CHANGE LIVES THROUGH CUTTING-EDGE ADVOCACY AND EXCEPTIONAL LEGAL REPRESENTATION.

This year was unlike any other. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, CLS stepped up. And you stepped up with us.

With your support, we served 11,900 clients this year, while helping tens of thousands more through our powerful systemic advocacy. Advocates from all legal units at CLS have been working tirelessly to ensure that clients can maintain their housing, health, utilities, nutrition assistance, and income.

Although we could not have predicted what this year would bring, our response to new problems brought on by the pandemic has mirrored the approach we have been using for more than 50 years: listening to what our clients need, adapting our priorities, and formulating innovative solutions. We developed entirely new areas of expertise to help families access vital income. We advocated for new policies and relief programs that prevent homelessness, keep families together, and keep people connected to basic necessities. We found creative ways to reach hundreds of thousands of people in our community with important information about their rights and available resources.

We are also looking ahead, knowing that our clients will feel the long-term effects of the crisis. From strengthening the safety net to expanding record sealing, our advocacy strives to give people opportunities to recover and thrive.

Thank you for your vital support, which allows us to continue fighting for justice for our clients through the toughest times. We could not do this work without you.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Freedman'.

Debby Freedman
Executive Director

Justice in a Crisis: CLS Response to the Pandemic

CLS clients have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, facing job loss, hunger, cold and the risk of homelessness. CLS advocates jumped in to fight for justice and ensure Philadelphia families can survive this crisis. CLS has advocated successfully to ensure that complex systems work for struggling families, through direct legal representation, high-impact litigation, targeted media, virtual and digital community education, and policy advocacy at all levels of government.

Some of our important successes during 2020 include:



Advocating for moratoriums on evictions, foreclosures, and utility shutoffs, keeping people safely in their homes.



Working to get water, gas and electric service restored for households who were shut off, so they would have life-essential utilities during the stay-at-home order.



Pushing for suspension of Medicaid and SNAP terminations so people can maintain health insurance and food through the pandemic.



Advocating for the expansion of Philadelphia's sick leave law to protect workers' health and safety.



Advocating for and implementing Philadelphia's new eviction diversion program, which prevents homelessness.



Working with PA officials to release more than \$50 million in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

High-impact Litigation

CLS and Morgan Lewis sued the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for excluding the lowest-income families from receiving emergency SNAP allotments (food stamps). The pandemic has made it even harder for low-income people to safely and affordably access food, and the USDA's unlawful position denies help to families who are most in danger of going hungry.

CLS, the Villanova Federal Tax Law Clinic, and Berger Montague teamed up to sue the IRS for making stimulus payments inaccessible to people with disabilities and their children. The IRS has since reversed its policy and agreed to give SSI and Social Security recipients more time to get payments, which will help families maintain stability during the pandemic.

Outreach

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Philadelphians have been desperate for information about new laws and programs and how to get help. We responded with a constant stream of up to date information.

During the pandemic, our website has received more than 1,117,000 views, many on pages related to COVID-19. Additionally, we have done more than 250 community education sessions and trainings for other advocates, so that people know their rights and resources available to them.

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Each year since 1990, Community Legal Services has hosted the Breakfast of Champions, generously sponsored by the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association. Awards are presented to friends of CLS who demonstrate exceptional standards of service or innovation in ensuring access to justice. The Breakfast also recognizes law firms that give to CLS's Bar Campaign each year.

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JULY 01, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT

Contracts & Grants	\$12,282,019
Contributions	\$2,485,399
Attorney Fees	\$139,111
Interest Income	\$67,541
Other Income	\$2,000
Subtotal Revenue	\$14,976,070

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$13,671,355
Management & General	\$1,095,741
Fundraising	\$336,288
Total Expenses	\$15,103,384

TOTAL ASSETS

Change in Assets	\$127,314
Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$14,620,246
End of Year	\$15,103,384

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