

Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

30 YEARS OF
INVESTING
IN JUSTICE

Dear friends of legal aid,

This year, we celebrated our 30th anniversary of providing leadership, funding and support to the Massachusetts legal aid community. Our Commonwealth has a proud tradition of providing access to justice for its neediest residents, a tradition that began with the foundation of the Boston Legal Aid Society more than a century ago. As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past 30 years, we are working hard to continue that tradition, ensuring that everyone receives access to the quality legal advice and representation they deserve.

Since 1983, MLAC has supported legal aid programs as they assist unemployed workers, domestic violence survivors and foreclosed borrowers, among many others, who need legal help but cannot afford to hire a lawyer. We have distributed nearly \$350 million in grants to legal aid organizations across the Commonwealth. Our grantees serve the civil legal needs of some 30,000 clients each year, boosting the economy, cutting away at the root causes of poverty and helping our fellow citizens build better lives.

We are especially proud of the praise and recognition that our advocacy has won from supporters in the General Court and most Governors. MLAC owes its existence to legislation adopted by the General Court and signed by the Governor thirty years ago. Their successors continue to recognize our work as vitally important for the Commonwealth. The General Court and the Governor have maintained or increased funding for MLAC in recent years despite the difficult economic climate. Thanks to these appropriations, our organization remains the single largest source of legal aid funding in Massachusetts, and we look forward to maintaining our leadership role.

The effects of the 2008 financial crisis are still with us; nearly all of our grantees are operating at reduced staffing levels even as growing numbers of individuals and families request their help. Despite these challenges, legal aid advocates have made a tremendous impact. You can read about that impact in the following pages. The impact is monetary—legal aid advocates won millions of dollars in disability payments for the elderly and avoided millions more in medical costs by defending domestic violence victims. The impact is also collaborative—private attorneys donated tens of thousands of hours of skilled pro-bono assistance working alongside their legal aid colleagues. Perhaps most important, the impact is deeply personal—legal aid helped Randy, Charlene, TracyLee and Lynnica rebuild their lives, care for their families and strengthen their neighborhoods. Their stories are told in this report, and we hope you are as moved by their triumphs as we are.

As we celebrate the past 30 years, we renew our commitment to ensuring that the Constitution's promise of "justice for all" does not go unfulfilled. Thank you for your support.



A blue ink signature of Rahsaan D. Hall.

Rahsaan D. Hall
Chair



A blue ink signature of Lonnie A. Powers.

Lonnie A. Powers
Executive Director

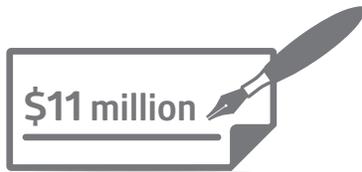


MLAC-funded programs closed 25,652 cases. This assistance benefited 88,204 individuals and family members in Massachusetts.

Potential savings for Massachusetts as a result of MLAC-funded advocacy totaled an estimated \$18 million. This includes \$7 million in avoided medical and emergency shelter costs from legal assistance that kept low income families from losing their homes.



MLAC's Battered Women's Legal Assistance Project assisted 2,141 domestic violence victims, most with complex cases involving physical safety, child custody and support, financial security, health care coverage, and other issues. The project saved the state \$4 million in avoided medical and court costs as a result of assistance to domestic violence victims.



In FY13, new federal revenue for civil legal aid clients won by MLAC-funded organizations totaled an estimated \$11 million.



FY 2013 Accomplishments

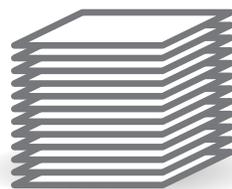


MLAC's Disability Benefits Project closed 976 cases, winning federal SSI/SSDI benefits for clients in 81 percent of cases in which a decision was made. The project brought \$488,850 in direct federal reimbursement to Massachusetts as well as \$6,312,979 in payments to clients over just the first year of benefits.

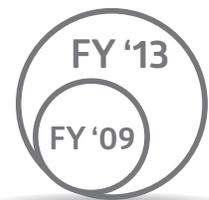
MLAC's Medicare Advocacy Project helped 479 elders and people with disabilities appeal denials of Medicare coverage for the health care services they needed.



MLAC-funded organizations employed 191 attorneys and 50 paralegals (full-time equivalents).



191 attorneys
50 paralegals



611 private attorneys collectively donated 37,000 hours of skilled pro-bono assistance through MLAC-funded programs, representing a value of more than \$8.3 million. These volunteers work side-by-side with legal services attorneys to ensure access to justice for more of the Commonwealth's neediest residents.

Justice won: 2013 in stories

Lynnicia Barnett

Lynnicia worked part-time at a day care center, earning \$800 a month. It was enough to pay her share of the subsidized rent on a bare-bones apartment where she lived with her two-year old son Myshon. But in 2013, Lynnicia discovered that the federal subsidy attached to her apartment was expiring, and the rent would soon be raised. She would barely have enough left over to feed herself, let alone care for her son, who is being treated for sickle-cell disease. She considered moving in with her mother, but her mom also lives in subsidized housing and can't host guests for more than 30 consecutive days.



With nowhere else to go, Lynnicia applied to stay in an emergency family shelter. She was placed in a shelter in western Massachusetts. Since she had no car, commuting to her job and Myshon's medical appointments would have been nearly impossible: a train and bus journey that would take more than 6 hours each way.

So Lynnicia contacted the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, where attorney Liza Hirsch agreed to take her case. Liza immediately contacted the shelter agency to request a transfer to a shelter in the Boston area based on Myshon's need for medical treatment. The request was granted, and Lynnicia was placed at a shelter in Brighton. She can continue to work, and Myshon receives the medical treatments he needs. Lynnicia is grateful that she found legal aid. As soon as she met Liza, she says, "I knew there was light at the end of the tunnel."

 Lynnicia's story was featured in a **WBUR radio** story. [Click here to read more: www.mlac.org/lynnicia](http://www.mlac.org/lynnicia)

Charlene Julce

A first-generation Haitian-American, Charlene Julce knows what it means to work hard. She has a demanding job as an administrator at a computer testing center in South Boston, and her mother worked two full-time jobs as a nurse's assistant. Their incomes were enough to afford the mortgage on a small duplex in Malden. The family lived in one unit and rented out the other for additional income.

In 2009, Charlene and her mother both suffered from severe health problems that required them to leave work. With no income, the family fell behind on their mortgage, and Charlene negotiated a modified loan with their bank. But without telling her, the bank initiated foreclosure proceedings at the same time as approving the modification, a procedure known as a "dual-track" foreclosure that was all too common during the recent financial crisis.

Charlene was terrified of being evicted until she met Lauren Song and Dick Bauer, attorneys at Greater Boston Legal Services. Lauren and Dick discovered that the bank had improperly notified Charlene's family about the foreclosure. During an emotional trial in November 2013, the attorneys convinced the jury that the bank had illegally foreclosed on the family's loan. The foreclosure was invalidated, and Charlene is overjoyed that thanks to legal aid, her family can keep their home.



 Charlene's story was featured on **WGBH radio**. [Click here to listen: www.mlac.org/charlene](http://www.mlac.org/charlene)

Randy Haley

Randy, a truck driver from Dudley, had spent his entire career behind the wheel. But when his employer stopped paying Randy for all his hours of work, he had no choice but to leave his job and file for unemployment. Melissa Pomfred, an attorney from Community Legal Aid in Worcester, helped ensure that Randy got the unemployment insurance he needed to support his family while he searched for a new job.

"I know that without Melissa's help, I would have lost everything, and my wife and son and I would have been on the street," Randy says.

🌐 Randy's story appeared in the [Worcester Telegram & Gazette](#).
Click here to read more: www.mlac.org/randy



TracyLee Boutilier

TracyLee Boutilier was devastated when she learned that her new landlord wanted to increase the rent on her modest Amherst apartment to \$1,800 a month. A single mother of two, TracyLee receives a subsidy from Amherst's Housing Authority, which requires her rent to remain below \$1,400 a month. The landlord knew that TracyLee wouldn't be able to afford the rent without a subsidy, so he moved to evict her.

"My stomach dropped when I saw the eviction letter," TracyLee recalls. "We didn't do anything wrong, but an eviction just feels so personal. This is where my kids have grown up."

She prepared for the worst, thinking about the dimensions of her storage shelter and wondering what living in a car would be like. But she found help from Community Legal Aid (CLA) in Northampton, where attorney Jennifer

Dieringer and AmeriCorps volunteer Liz Alfred discovered that the landlord had failed to properly terminate the tenancy before issuing the eviction notice. They filed suit in housing court to stop the eviction. In August 2013, the judge ruled in favor of TracyLee and dismissed the eviction.

TracyLee continues to work with CLA to find ways of keeping Echo Village affordable for families like hers. She's hopeful that she and her children will be able to remain in their home.

"Everywhere we were turning, we were hearing that nothing could be done," TracyLee says. It was a 'no' on everything. But legal aid fought for us. To put it simply, we had a champion."

🌐 See the YouTube video at www.mlac.org/tracylee



Statewide Programs

Center for Law and Education

General Support:	\$90,782
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$6,183
Fellowship:	\$50,000
Total:	\$146,965

Center for Public Representation:

General Support:	\$154,124
Disability Benefits Project:	\$35,396
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$6,370
Total:	\$195,890

Disability Law Center

General Support:	\$181,268
Disability Benefits Project:	\$182,256
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$2,980
Total:	\$366,504

Massachusetts Advocates for Children

General Support:	\$71,482
Total:	\$71,482

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

General Support:	\$1,086,112
Battered Women's Legal Assistance:	\$82,868
WebSite:	\$271,933
Farm Workers:	\$19,280
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$89,096
Fellowship:	\$25,888
Attorney General (AG) HomeCorps:	\$18,929
Total:	\$1,594,106

National Consumer Law Center

General Support:	\$90,786
AG HomeCorps:	\$310,152
Total:	\$400,938

Prisoner's Legal Services

General Support:	\$117,930
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$2,207
Total:	\$120,137

Volunteer Lawyers' Project

AG HomeCorps:	\$12,740
Total:	\$12,740

Local Programs

EASTERN REGION

Community Legal Services & Counseling Center

General Support:	\$67,572
Disability Benefits Project:	\$9,148
Battered Women's Legal Assistance:	\$21,168
Total:	\$97,888

Greater Boston Legal Services

General Support:	\$2,408,774
Medicare Advocacy Project:	\$289,288
Disability Benefits Project:	\$327,612
Battered Women's Legal Assistance:	\$766,096
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$139,690
AG HomeCorps:	\$320,222
Total:	\$4,251,682

Metro West Legal Services

General Support:	\$339,367
Disability Benefits Project:	\$46,116
Battered Women's Legal Assistance:	\$100,556
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$18,221
AG HomeCorps:	\$88,490
Total:	\$592,750

TOTAL EASTERN REGION: \$4,942,320

NORTHEAST REGION

Children's Law Center

General Support:	\$101,292
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$1,816
Total:	\$103,108

Merrimack Valley Legal Services

AG Home Corps:	\$151,090
Battered Women's Legal Assistance:	\$376,396
Total:	\$527,486

Neighborhood Legal Services

General Support:	\$1,088,588
Disability Benefits Project:	\$159,208
Regional Reorganization Grant:	\$10,000
AG HomeCorps:	\$138,379
Total:	\$1,396,175

TOTAL NORTHEAST REGION: \$2,026,769

SOUTHEAST REGION

South Coastal Counties Legal Services

General Support:	\$1,288,816
Medicare Advocacy Project:	\$61,136
Disability Benefits Project:	\$172,100
Battered Women's Legal Assistance:	\$422,660
AG HomeCorps:	\$167,115

TOTAL SOUTHEAST REGION: \$2,111,827

CENTRAL / WEST REGION

Community Legal Aid

General Support:	\$2,077,136
Medicare Advocacy Project:	\$96,556
Disability Benefits Project:	\$247,060
Battered Women's Legal Assistance:	\$667,520
Technology Grants and Equipment:	\$48,005
Fellowships:	\$29,440
AG HomeCorps:	\$563,433

TOTAL CENTRAL/WEST REGION: \$3,729,150

FY 2013 Grants to Programs

\$15,554,998 total

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the year ending
June 30, 2013

APPROPRIATED PROJECTS

Battered

Disability Benefits Project
Medicare Advocacy Project
Women Legal Assistance Project

	Disability Benefits Project	Medicare Advocacy Project	Battered Women Legal Assistance Project	General Support	IOLTA Committee	Attorney General HomeCorps	Program Support Initiatives	IOLTA Administrative Services	MLAC Administrative	Fixed Asset Fund	Total All Funds
REVENUE											
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Comm. of Massachusetts-HomeCorps	1,178,889	446,979	2,437,261	7,936,871		1,770,550					12,000,000
IOLTA					4,208,242						1,770,550
BBO Opt-out Dues add on					771,746						4,208,242
Pro Hac Vice Fees					117,456						771,746
Cy Pres Awards					99,830						117,456
Donated Legal Services						37,500		62,008	492,803		99,830
Management fees											492,803
Special Events*							235,863		63,243		99,508
Interest and other income									70,482		63,243
Total revenue	1,178,889	446,979	2,437,261	7,936,871	5,197,274	1,808,050	235,863	62,008	626,528	0	19,929,723
EXPENSES											
Grants Awarded	1,178,896	446,980	2,437,264	7,876,347	2,707,227	1,770,550					15,539,021
Loan forgiveness				60,523	19,591						74,578
Salaries						23,805	445,341	12,349	539,817		1,021,312
Occupancy							20,202	45,057	194,891		260,150
Professional services							305,535	4,602	722,531		1,028,066
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits							108,976		123,233		236,811
Other support services							283,448		71,796		355,244
Fellowships							105,328				105,328
Depreciation										31,190	31,190
Travel									16,374		20,812
Office											2,666
Total expenses before allocation of administrative expense	1,178,896	446,980	2,437,264	7,936,870	2,726,818	1,794,355	1,275,934	62,008	1,668,642	31,190	18,675,178
Allocation of Administrative Expense	85,646	32,473	177,067	576,615	335,228				-1,207,029	0	0
Total Expenses	1,264,542	479,453	2,614,331	8,513,485	3,062,046	1,794,355	1,275,934	62,008	461,613	31,190	18,675,178
Excess (deficiency) of revenue	-85,653	-32,474	-177,070	-576,614	2,135,228	13,695	-1,040,071	0	164,915	-31,190	1,254,545
NET ASSETS June 30, 2012	0	0	0	0	1,427,486	0	0	0	0	38,720	1,466,206
Transfer to other funds	85,653	32,474	177,070	576,614	-1,034,617	-13,695	1,040,071	0	0	20,209	0
NET ASSETS, June 30, 2013	0	0	0	0	2,528,097	0	0	0	164,915	27,739	2,720,751

*Net of 20,900 direct Expense

Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation

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