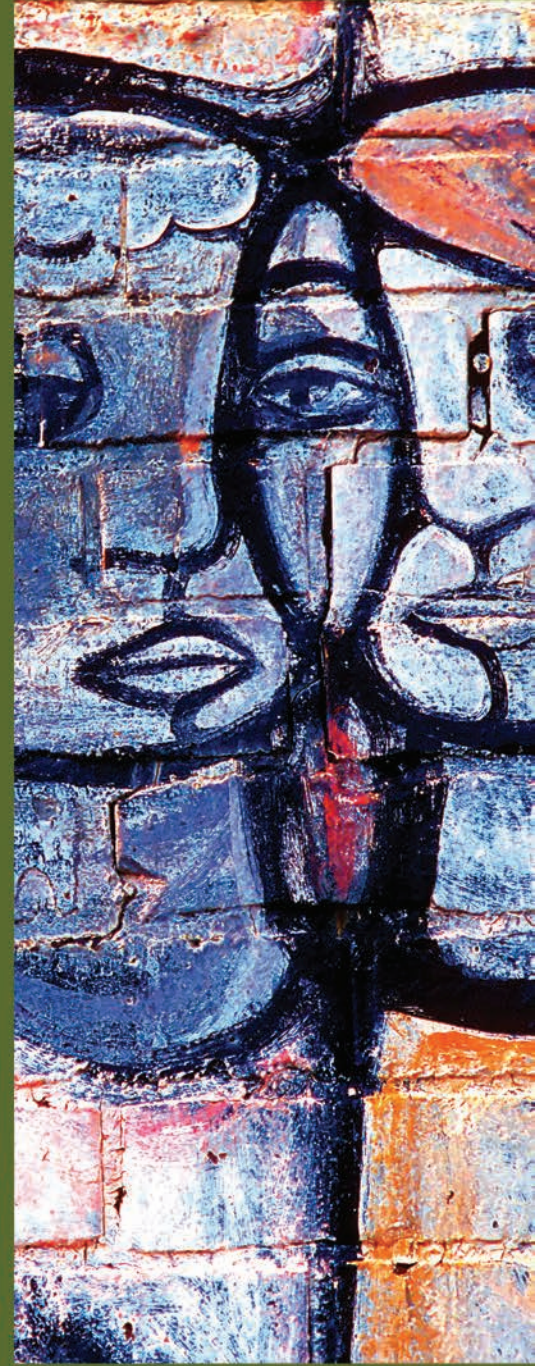


# DuPage Legal Assistance Foundation



## 2017 Annual Report

Helping Families in DuPage County for Over 40 Years

126 South County Farm Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187

(630) 653-6212 [www.dupagelegalaid.org](http://www.dupagelegalaid.org)

# From Our Executive Director



Growing up in DuPage County, with a mother who was disabled, I witnessed firsthand how our community helps those that are less fortunate. From individuals that help fulfill personal and immediate needs to those organizations like the DuPage Legal Assistance Foundation ("DuPage Legal Aid") that help with legal issues. Although legal issues may not seem that immediate to the outsider, legal issues can certainly be critical and all-consuming; leaving individuals unable to move forward with their lives.

DuPage Legal Aid provides legal assistance to the indigent of DuPage County, with divorce, parentage, Orders of Protection, bankruptcies, expungements, guardianships, and adoptions. Additionally, our office has two Spanish speakers on staff who allow us to help Spanish speaking clients. Many times our clients are domestic violence victims, elderly, or disabled. DuPage Legal Aid serves individuals that have a household income of up to 175% of the federal poverty guideline. If the client is

a domestic violence victim, elderly, or disabled, we allow a household income of up to 250% of the federal poverty guideline.

During this most recent fiscal year (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017), the attorneys employed by our office completed a total of 307 cases and our volunteer attorneys closed an additional 159 cases. DuPage Legal Aid was responsible for providing approximately 10,840 hours of pro bono legal services during this past fiscal year.

This would not be possible without the support of the membership of the DuPage County Bar Association ("DCBA"). Over 400 volunteer attorneys from DCBA accept pro bono cases to litigate from beginning to end. The membership's dedication to protecting the vulnerable, giving access to the legal process, and advocating for those less fortunate is the tradition on which our program was founded. DCBA's membership is the backbone of our program. Their time, effort, and donations have helped thousands of individuals in our community achieve a more stable life and brighter futures. THANK YOU!

We are continuing to work with the DCBA on a Veterans Initiative Program that serves veterans and will direct them to an experienced attorney equipped to help them with their legal issues. Please help us get the word out that we are a resource for our veterans.



We also want to take the time to thank the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit, the Lawyers Trust Fund, DuPage County Human Services Grant Fund, Naperville Exchange Club, and Milton Township for financially supporting our program and the individuals that we help.

If you are inclined to volunteer or donate to our program or have any suggestions, concerns, or questions for us, please do not hesitate to call (630-653-6212) or visit us at [dupagelegalaid.org](http://dupagelegalaid.org).

-Cecilia Najera, Executive Director

## Statement of Financial Position and Activities

### CURRENT ASSETS

|                             |           |                |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Cash                        | \$        | 128,182        |
| Grants Receivable           |           | 10,725         |
| Prepaid Expenses            |           | 1,152          |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b> |           | <b>140,059</b> |
| <b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>   |           | <b>17,841</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>\$</b> | <b>157,900</b> |

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

|                            |           |                |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b> |           | <b>691</b>     |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b>          |           | <b>157,209</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>\$</b> | <b>157,900</b> |

### PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES

|  |           |                |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| Grants   | \$        | 362,550        |
| Contributions  |           | 39,349         |
| Special Events (Net of Direct Benefits to Donors of \$0) |           | 19,992         |
| Interest Income  |           | 166            |
| Miscellaneous Income                                     |           | 22             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$</b> | <b>422,079</b> |

### FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

|                        |           |                |
|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Program Services       | \$        | 343,854        |
| Management and General |           | 25,376         |
| Fundraising            |           | 10,391         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>\$</b> | <b>379,621</b> |



Photos on page two (clockwise): DuPage Legal Aid Executive Director Cecilia Najera with DuPage County Bar Association Executive Director, Robert Rupp; Hon. Joshua J. Dieden from the DCBA-KCBA Softball Program; 2016-17 DCBA President Ted A. Donner, Veterans Day Chair Terrence Benschopf, Veterans Initiative Program Chair, Tim Whelan, 2017-18 DCBA President Gerry Cassioppi, 2018-19 DCBA President Matthew Pfeiffer, and 2019-20 DCBA President, Stacey McCullough at the inaugural Veterans Initiative Program; Mary Downard and Alycia Fitz, Fundraisers at the DCBA Golf Outing.

Photos on page three: Scenes from the 2018 DCBA Judges' Nite, "Gerry Tales: Laughing Together, Regretting Together," produced by Christina Morrison and directed by Nicolas Nelson. Judges' Nite raised over \$20,000 for DuPage Legal Aid.

# Our Mission Statement

The DuPage Legal Assistance Foundation was incorporated as an Illinois not-for-profit corporation on October 10, 1975: (A) to assist natural persons and community organizations to secure legal protection against injustice and to obtain due process of law and the equal protection of the laws; (B) to promote knowledge of the law and of legal process, rights and responsibilities among the poor and the public generally; and (C) to study the use of law and legal process to combat poverty and living conditions among the poor and to provide counsel to natural persons and groups seeking these ends.

## LEGAL AID STATISTICS

We accept telephone screening calls from individuals seeking legal assistance from 9:00am until 2:00pm, Monday through Friday. Victims of domestic violence are screened daily from 8:30am to 5:00pm. During the screening process, individuals are asked a series of questions to determine if their situation meets financial and case-type guidelines to receive free legal assistance through the program. In addition, screened individuals must submit a written application with supporting documentation to verify their eligibility for assistance. If an applicant is approved, they are assigned to either a volunteer attorney who is a member of the DuPage County Bar Association or one of our In House staff attorneys. Applicants who are denied are given an opportunity to appeal that denial. Others who are denied, but fit other criteria, may be referred to the Modest Means Program, the DCBA's Lawyer Referral Service ("LRS"), or other programs.

## 2016-2017 COMPARISON STATISTICS

|                               | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Total New Cases Screened      | 1,770   | 1,830   |
| Assigned to In House Counsel  | 350     | 286     |
| Assigned to DCBA Volunteers   | 121     | 144     |
| Referred to DCBA-LRS          | 520     | 673     |
| Referred To Prairie State     | 10      | 7       |
| Referred Out of County        | 13      | 13      |
| Referred to Modest Means      | 25      | 22      |
| Completed by DCBA Volunteers  | 142     | 159     |
| Completed by In House Counsel | 359     | 307     |

## 2016-17 TOTAL PROGRAM ACTIVITY

|                         | DCBA Volunteer | In-House |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Total Cases             | 213            | 403      |
| Total Court Appearances | 1,123          | 1,005    |
| Total Hours             | 5,522.2        | 5,318.7  |

# DuPage Legal Assistance Foundation

Helping Families in DuPage County for Over 40 Years

"I am constantly humbled by the hardworking attorneys and staff employed by this organization who make it possible to serve hundreds of DuPage County residents each year. I am impressed by the work ethic and zealous advocacy that goes into each individual case that is pursued. DuPage Bar Legal Aid reminds me that the law is not a business, but a service profession. And if we have respect for the law, we have a duty and responsibility to give back to our community. I am proud to be a part of an organization so dedicated to this commitment and I am inspired and empowered by all of the individuals who contribute their time and money to support its success." - *Lisa Giese, Volunteer Attorney*

"I feel like my attorney worked very hard for me; she gave my case the time and dedication it required. My situation was very difficult and I wouldn't have been able to get through it without her continued support. I felt confident that my case was in good hands with DuPage Legal Aid. The representation I received gave me the ability to focus on my daughter, my job, and rebuilding my life." - *G.H., former client of DuPage Legal Aid*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sean McCumber, President  
Connie Gessner, Vice President  
Heather Jamieson, Secretary  
Penny Hinze, Treasurer  
Mary C. Downard  
Bernard Kleina  
Dorothy Mintz  
Lisa K. Murphy  
Michael J. Scalzo  
Joseph Yee  
Jeff York

## SERVICE STAFF

Cecilia Najera, Executive Director  
Brenda Carroll, Staff Attorney  
Robin Slattery, Staff Attorney  
Robin Roe, Office Manager  
Lucy Cortez, Intake Coordinator  
Maribel Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant (FT)  
Timothy Golen, Administrative Assistant (PT)  
Kasey Wheeler-Coughlin, Intern  
Komal Siddiqui, Intern

## DONATIONS

UP TO \$100  
Day, Robert, and Morrison; Mary Downard;  
Dorothy Mintz; Sarah Poeppel  
\$101-500  
David Bressler; Joel Fina; Scott Hardek; Hon. Ann Jorgensen; John Mangan; Hon. Bonnie Wheaton; Jeff York  
\$501-1,000  
Cerena Fischer  
\$1,001 - \$4,999  
Carol Stream Rotary Club  
\$5,000  
Anonymous Attorney

## GRANTS

18th Judicial Circuit Civil Filing Fee Grant  
DuPage County Bar Association  
Human Services Grant Fund  
Lawyers Trust Fund  
Naperville Exchange Club  
Wayne Township



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