



**DuPage  
Legal Aid**

**2018**  
Annual Report

*Advocating for legal rights,  
continuing a tradition of service  
in DuPage County*



## From Our Executive Director

help give DuPage Legal Aid an updated identity and message of its own. I am so excited to continue building the core of our program and position DuPage Legal Aid for even more growth.

I have always felt that DuPage Legal Aid is a Program of neighbors helping neighbors. The vast majority of our staff and volunteers reside or have an office in DuPage County. Ninety-eight percent of our clients are DuPage County residents. DuPage Legal Aid continues to maintain its volunteer base of over 400 attorneys, and provide free legal assistance to individuals that qualify for our program in primarily family law cases. This year we helped 574 individuals which included monthly Legal Clinics in conjunction with Family Shelter Service and Loaves and Fishes. We continue to enjoy a close relationship with the DuPage County Bar Association (“DCBA”) and screen for their Modest Means and Veterans’ Initiative Program. Additionally, this year we saw our fundraising efforts increase donations by almost 44% more than the prior year. This is thanks to all of the efforts put forth towards Judges’

Nite, our biggest fundraiser of the year. My deepest thanks to all of you who attended Judges’ Nite and contributed to DuPage Legal Aid this year by serving as a Board Member, volunteering to take a case *pro bono*, acting as a committee member, sponsoring a fundraising event, donating to this good cause, and especially to the staff of the DCBA who promote *pro bono* services and help us throughout the year.

We would also like 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

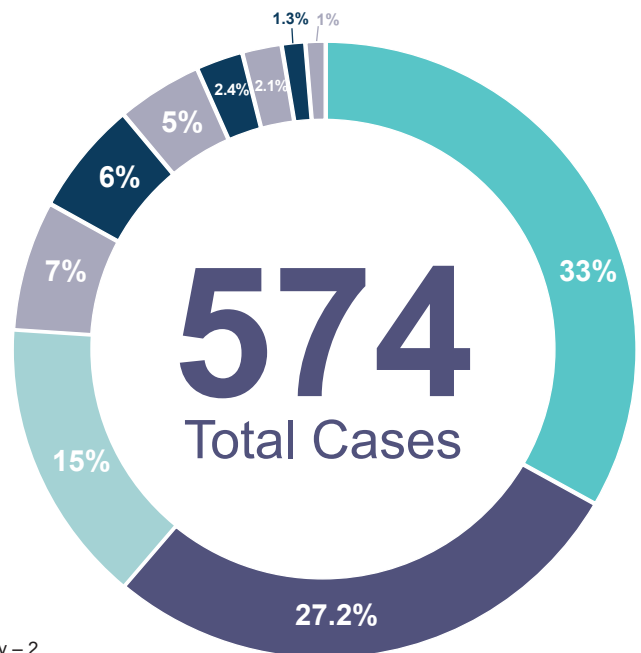
We have closed the 2017-2018 fiscal year, and this year has brought growth for DuPage Legal Aid. Our staff and volunteers were hard at work and, once again, provided over 10,000 hours of *pro bono* legal service in DuPage County for the third year in a row (10,378.8 to be exact). Additionally, I had the pleasure of working with our dedicated Board members and Anchor Advisors to create and complete our new Strategic Plan made possible by an additional and one-time grant given to us from Lawyers Trust Fund. We are so grateful for the opportunity. The Plan is now being implemented and we now have a Mission Statement and Tagline that

## DuPage Legal Aid Service FY 2017-18 Cases by Type — Percentage

Order of Protection/ Domestic Violence	187	33%
Divorce	156	27.2%
Parentage	84	15%
Bankruptcy/Consumer	38	7%
Guardianship	34	6%
Guardian Ad Litem	25	5%
Miscellaneous Legal*	14	2.4%
Support (Maintenance)	12	2.1%
Housing Issues**	7	1.3%
Wills and Estates***	5	1%

\*Miscellaneous Legal (14)  
Employment – 4 Clinics  
Immigration – 2 Clinics  
Driver’s License/Traffic – 4 Clinics  
Other Misc. – 4 (1 Clinic, 2 Veterans – PBA, 1 Court-Ordered Appointment)

\*\*Housing Issues (7)  
APS – 1 (PBA)  
Requested/Contacted by PBA Attorney – 2  
Court-Ordered Appointment – 2 (PBA)  
Clinics – 2  
\*\*\*Wills and Estates (5)  
Disabled Probate – 1 (PBA)  
Court-Ordered Appointment – 2 (PBA)  
Clinics – 2





## Comparison Statistics

2016/17 2017/18

Total New Cases Screened:	1830	2134
Assigned to In-House Counsel:	286	332
Assigned to DCBA Volunteers:	144	121
Referred to DCBA-LRS:	673	612
Referred to Other Legal Service Organization:	7	3
Referred to Out of County Services:	13	16
Referred to No Retainer Attorney:	10	9
Modest Means (DCBA program):	12	15
Completed by In-House Counsel:	307	342
Completed by DCBA Volunteers:	159	117

## 2017-18 Total Program Activity

197

Total DCBA  
Volunteer Cases

377

Total In- House  
Cases

1,061

Total DCBA Volunteer  
Court Appearances

1,023

Total In- House  
Court Appearances

5,087

Total DCBA  
Volunteer Hours

5,292

Total In- House  
Hours

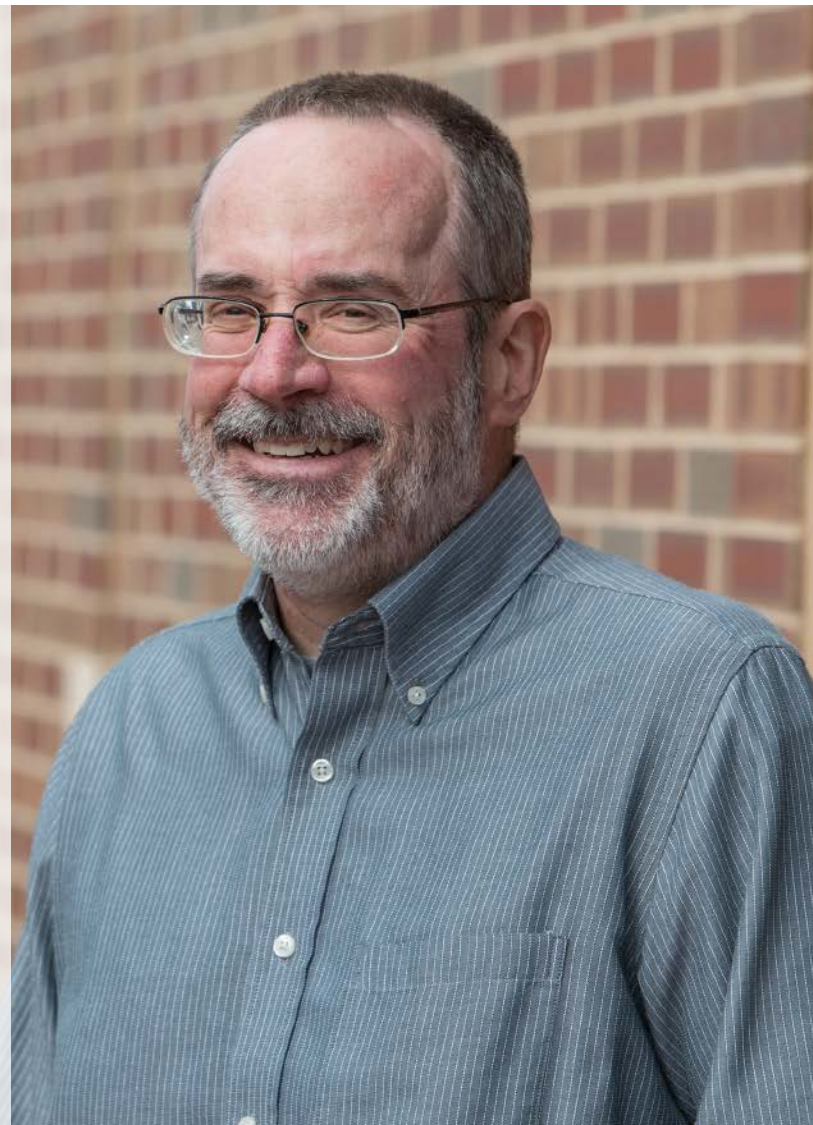
10,378

Total Volunteer Hours

*He has a Masters Degree in Engineering and found himself facing a major health crisis that required major surgery and left him unable to work for a long period of time. All of his assets had been depleted. On top of that he had a legal issue that seemed insurmountable. DuPage Legal Aid provided him with legal assistance. I am very humbled by what he says about our program...*

I would like to thank DuPage Legal Aid for their assistance in resolving a civil case for me. My attorney was excellent at navigating the complex case and I was always confident that I was well-represented. I received a better understanding of my case. DuPage Legal Aid's assistance allowed me to focus on my recovery and rehabilitation from a very serious medical condition.

- Jerry Rauwolf





“*DuPage Legal Aid is dedicated to enlisting the pro bono aspect of lawyering by connecting DuPage County residents to high quality, compassionate legal representation. We educate and support individuals, families and community partners, and we provide our clients with the legal link to a brighter future.*”

Current staff left to right: Brenda Carroll, Lucy Cortez, Maribel Rodriguez, Cecilia Najera, Robin Slattery, Robin Roe, and Melissa Chandler.

## Board of Directors and Staff 2017-18

### Officers

President: Sean McCumber  
 Vice-President: Connie Gessner  
 Secretary: Jeff York  
 Treasurer: Penny Hinze

### Directors

Mary C. Downard  
 Heather Jamieson  
 Bernard Kleina  
 Dorothy Mintz  
 Lisa K. Murphy  
 Michael J. Scalzo  
 Joseph Yee

### Office Staff

Cecilia Najera, Executive Director/Managing Attorney  
 Brenda Carroll, Staff Attorney (PT)  
 Robin Slattery, Staff Attorney (PT)  
 Robin Roe, Office Manager  
 Lucy Cortez, Intake Coordinator  
 Maribel Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant  
 Tim Golen, Administrative Assistant (PT)

### Interns

Jamie Bishop  
 Thomas Harshaw  
 Julianna Long  
 Milan Williams

## Donations

### Less than \$100

Sooha Ahmad, Cindy Allston, Steven Armamentos, Scott Asselmeier, Mark Bishop, Mary Downard, Ted Donner, Michael Drabant, Glenn Gaffney, Michael and Monique Godziszewski, Rachael Gould, Jacki Hamler, Megan Harris, Angela Hart, Angela Iaria, Victoria Jozef, Raleigh Kalbfleisch, Adam Kruse, Jorie Kuda, Joe Kwiatkowski, Joe Macaluso, Stacey McCullough, Christina Morrison, Cecilia Najera, Azam Nizamuddin, Matt Pfeiffer, Darlene Plis, Laura Pokorney, Chantelle Porter, Robert Rupp, Lawrence Rynning, Mike Scalzo, Bill Scott, Michael and Elizabeth Sitrick, Virginia Stein, Douglas Strohm, Jeff York, and Greg Wildman.

### \$100 - \$500

Amy J. Anderson, Honorable Robert Anderson, Irene Bahr, Judith Bolles Jenz, Tricia Buhrfiend, James Butkus, Gerald Cassioppi, Kimberly Davis, Honorable Robert Douglas, Honorable William Ferguson, Cheryl Hamel, Scott and Jennifer Hollmeyer, Daniel Kuhn, Pattie Murray, Sally Mutch, Giovanni Raimondi, Dan Regan, Jim Reichardt, Robert and Dorothy Riesbeck, Jim Ryan, John and Denise Pcolinski, Robert and Janet Plecki, Joel Fina, Kent and Mary Gaertner, Jeffrey Suess and Marianne Price, Fred and Therese Wittenmeier, Cerena Fischer, Rodney and Cathy Equi, Denise Erlich, Chad Husnick, Wendy Musielak, Don and Danielle Provenzale, and Honorable Bonnie Wheaton.

### \$1,273.49

Motorola Solutions Foundation

### \$5,000

Anonymous Attorney

### Grants

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