

BUILDING





FOR THIRTY YEARS

2 0 1 8 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter from the Executive Director, Thomas D. Yates

Dear friend,

Legal Council is officially 30! And we have our kind, generous supporters to thank for helping us reach this milestone.

There is a lot to be proud of, and much has been accomplished over the past three decades. Tens of thousands of people living with illness and disability have accessed our free legal care programs, resulting in the opportunity to pursue their full potential. But there is still so much to do.

Here is a snapshot of the over 2,300 clients whom Legal Council served this year:

- 95% live below the poverty line.
- 87% have a disability.
- 85% have no income at all.
- 50% of adult clients are survivors of childhood trauma.
- 49% have HIV.

Sincerely,

• 20% of child clients are denied access to special education.

Legal Council's caseload continues to increase. We are expanding training and outreach, and now see people with legal problems at over a dozen service providers across the region. And as we continue to grow, Legal Council is preserving Illinois' health safety net, using class-action lawsuits and high-impact litigation to ensure that hospitals, clinics, and human service agencies caring for our clients and communities remain strong.

As we look to the future and the continuation of 30 years of building better lives, your support will allow us to do even more, expanding our work to serve more people than ever, whether that be through direct legal care and education, policy initiatives, or far-reaching impact litigation. Thank you for placing your trust in us. ACCESS COMMUNITY неагтн Network

Legal Council re-launches a medical-legal partnership with ACCESS Community Health Network to provide free on-site legal services to ACCESS patients at their Ashland clinic, focusing on three main service areas: accessing health coverage, public benefits, and housing assistance.

Legal Council becomes one of the charter members of Protecting Immigrant Families Illinois, a group dedicated to advocating on behalf of Illinois families whose access to basic needs programs-like food, medical, and housing assistance—are threatened.

Our Mission

Thomas More

Executive Director

Legal Council for Health Justice uses the power of the law to secure dignity, opportunity, and well-being for people facing barriers due to illness or disability.

Our Vision

Everyone deserves a fair chance to lead a life of dignity and opportunity.



May 2018

Legal Council attorneys file a class-action lawsuit against the State of Illinois for illegally denying Medicaid coverage for thousands of Illinoisans.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM FY2018

December 2017

Executive Director Tom Yates receives the esteemed Kathryn Smith Matkov Award presented by the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, honoring his commitment to excellence and accuracy in defining, illuminating, and informing the public on critical issues to American society, particularly in the areas of children, the elderly, and minorities.



November 2017

April 2018



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS HIV Program

During fiscal year 2018, services were provided at our main office in Chicago's Loop and at partner organization sites, including Austin CBC, CORE Center, Howard Brown Health, Mercy Hospital, and TPAN.

New Horizons: Another Year of Growth

Howard Brown Health. Three new staff members—Kenya Garrett-Burnett, Myron Grant, and Emma Hultgren-were compared to the general population, while transphobia hired to expand the Howard Brown legal clinics, and we are now in three Howard Brown sites on the far North, North, and South sides of the city.

doubled the number of cases for Howard Brown patients.

Our oldest program had another year of tremendous Based on Howard Brown's outreach, the program also growth in reach and capacity. From July 2017 to June expanded their capacity for addressing legal issues 2018, the HIV program expanded their partnership with affecting the transgender population. Transgender people are almost 50 times more at risk of living with HIV and HIV-related stigma reinforce barriers to accessing HIV testing and treatment in trans and gender nonconforming communities. Expanding Legal Council's presence onsite at Howard Brown better enables transgender and Along with doubling in staff size, the program more than gender nonconforming individuals to receive the care and services they are legally entitled to receive.



Defeating Discrimination

Legal Council made great accomplishments in protecting Illinoisans living with HIV from discrimination this year. The agency became a founding member of the HIV decriminalization task force, whose goal is modernizing HIV exposure laws in Illinois. In February 2018, we co-sponsored a panel discussion at the Center on Halsted featuring nationally-known experts on HIV decriminalization, including Maurice Chapman formerly of South Suburban HIV/AIDS Regional Clinics, Dr. Trevor Hoppe of SUNY-Albany and author of Punishing SUNY-Albany's Dr. Trevor Hoppe, author of Punishing Disease, speaks at Legal Disease, Sex Workers Outreach Project's Vera Council's HIV Criminalization Forum on Feb. 15, 2018. Lamarr, and Lambda Legal's Scott Schoettes. The forum was well-attended with around 100 guests and generated important conversations about the future of these laws in Illinois.

Other victories in protecting individuals with HIV from discrimination include successfully representing a Howard Brown patient who was denied short-term disability based on their HIV status, and referring two cases to the U.S. Attorney's office for investigation after a credible finding of discrimination based on HIV status. We continue to work with the U.S. Attorney's office to reach a satisfactory outcome in these cases.

Cook County Care

Legal Council was part of a coalition of advocates that program that helps Cook County residents cover the cost of succeeded in persuading the Cook County Health & treatment, and is specifically designed to assist uninsured or Hospitals System (CCHHS) to expand its CareLink underinsured individuals. With these changes to CareLink, program to make it easier for patients to access health Illinoisans now have better access to affordable clinic care in the Cook County system. CareLink is a free CCHHS visits, urgent or emergency services, and hospital stays.

Kenya Garrett-Burnett is a new senior staff attorney with the HIV program.



sing the power of the law to secur gnity, opportunity, and well-bein



MEET A CLIENT: MARTIN

Martin is a senior living with HIV, liver problems, chronic back pain, and other disabling conditions. After a series of accidents and facing the loss of vital health care and services, Martin worked with Legal Council to gain access to the life-saving medication he desperately needed.

Before a car accident and poor health began to take a toll on his body, Martin worked a steady job in safety maintenance. After the car accident, he was forced to take medical leave from work. Soon after, Martin celebrated his 65th birthday and his insurance was terminated. He received coverage from a program that serviced workers with disabilities, but didn't know that his insurance plan was only available to individuals under the age of 65. He could no longer afford life-saving medication and care.

Without access to HIV and liver medication, and without regular physical therapy for his back pain, Martin's health was at risk. At a loss, Martin reached out to Legal Council. Alongside his Legal Council case manager, Martin was connected to a medical provider who would care for him while he remained uninsured.

Together, Martin and Legal Council searched for insurance alternatives. Soon enough, Martin enrolled into Medicare and started receiving coverage at a rate he could afford. Because he needed more than twenty different medications, Legal Council also helped Martin access his medications through an Illinois assistance program at a price he could afford.

Now, Martin has returned to taking his medication and continuing his physical therapy. He receives the care and services he needs at an affordable rate, and his improved health allowed him to return to working full-time.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS Children & Families Program

During fiscal year 2018, our medical-legal partnerships assisting children with chronic illness or disabilities and their families collaborated with leading providers of pediatric care across Cook County, including ACCESS Community Health Network, Friend Family Health Center, UI Health's CHECK (Coordination of Health Care for Complex Kids) initiative, and the Under the Rainbow child and adolescent behavioral health clinic at Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Fighting for Special Education

Over the last year, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) special education students found an ally in Legal Council advocates as they led a coalition of advocates, teachers, parents, and students calling for an open investigation into CPS' special education program. In response to this pressure, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) launched a public inquiry examining CPS special education practices and found significant and unnecessary delays and denials in services. In May 2018, ISBE approved an independent monitor to oversee CPS as it begins to implement changes.

Since the May hearing, Legal Council decided to take matters into their own hands by **crafting legislation alongside Rep. Fred Crespo to enhance parent participation in special education programs**. Written as an amendment to the Illinois School Code, the bill provides parents and guardians with more information about their students and the IEP process, strengthening transparency and better enabling parents to participate as equal team members in CPS' special education process. The bill passed both the House and the Senate and was signed by Gov. Rauner later that summer.

Program Director Amy Zimmerman speaks to the press after a State Board of Education hearing on Chicago Public Schools' special education program.



Barb Cohen, Legal Council's new Legal Advocate, speaks at a House of Representatives hearing on Chicago Public Schools' special education program.

Child Health Policies

Illinois schools are one step closer to creating a safer environment for students living with asthma, thanks to collaborative advocacy from Legal Council and the Respiratory Health Association (RHA). A bill, now law, proposed by Legal Council and RHA improves access to life-saving medication by allowing schools to stock undesignated asthma rescue medication and allowing school nurses and trained school staff to administer the medication at the first signs of respiratory distress. For many of the 330,000 Illinois children with asthma, this policy is life-changing. Three out of four kids living with asthma are likely to experience symptoms of respiratory distress, leading to increased emergency room visits and hospitalizations. With this new law, children can continue receiving their education without the fear of not having access to their medication at school.

Legal Council partnered with RHA to propose and advocate for this bill, following the publication of our issue brief which analyzed the fit and feasibility of stock asthma rescue medication in Illinois schools.

Leading Lead Pilot

In November 2017, the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities awarded one of seven innovation grants to fund our pilot program dedicated to breaking systemic barriers to Early Intervention (EI) services among lead-exposed children, ages 0-3. With the success of this pilot, Illinois would be the first state in the nation to launch a comprehensive system of eligibility and access to these developmental services and supports for young children exposed to toxic levels of lead in places where they live, learn, and play.

Asthma in Illinois **Quick Facts**

• More than 330,000 children in Illinois are reported to have asthma.

• Fewer than 1 in 4 children with asthma have their asthma under control.

 Asthma causes an estimated 300,000 missed schools days per year in Illinois.

· Asthma medical costs in Illinois are projected to reach \$1.9 billion by 2020.

MEET A CLIENT: ALEXIS

At the age of 10, Alexis had been held back in school twice. Alexis couldn't recite her ABC's. In math class, she couldn't distinguish addition and subtraction symbols. Her mother tried day after day to get an evaluation and extra tutoring for her daughter, but the teachers insisted Alexis was fine, even though her grades implied otherwise.

After months of fruitless conversations with the school, Alexis' mom reached out to Legal Council. Legal Council's child health advocates fought for psychological testing, which revealed that Alexis had a severe learning disability. Contrary to what the school told Alexis' mom, she needed special education services in order to succeed.

Alexis was placed into a program at a higher-rated school with transportation to and from school and an Individualized Education Program. In this program, she is surrounded by children who have similar disabilities. Now, Alexis finally gets the care and attention she needs to expand her learning. With the help of Legal Council, Alexis and her family now receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), allowing them to receive monthly disability benefits and helping to stabilize the household financially.

After being in an unsupportive learning environment for so long, Alexis is now in a specialized learning program, where she can learn to recite her ABC's, and now has the opportunity to flourish. Legal Council's advocates could not be more excited about where Alexis and her family are heading.







PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Homeless Program

Legal Council's homeless program serves those who are homeless and at risk of being so, while living with a serious mental illness. During fiscal year 2018, services were provided at our main office in Chicago's Loop and at partner organization sites, including Breakthrough Urban Ministries, Franciscan Outreach, Matthew House, and San Jose Obrero Mission. The program added two new staff members: Brooks Weinberger, Legal Advocate and Avodah Fellow, and Kayla Brown, Program and Development AmeriCorps VISTA.

Searching for Stability

Following relocation efforts made by the City of Chicago, Legal Council's homeless advocates, often in partnership with mental health providers, began visiting several encampments near expressways and in parks to engage and assist people living with a disability who live outside or in emergency shelters. We helped all clients obtain medical and behavioral healthcare as well as support services and other resources.

Through the city's Homeless Management Information and Coordinated Entry Systems, Legal Council staff continue to document client living situations and health vulnerabilities to improve their access to housing.



Trauma-Informed Advocacy



Homeless Program Director Lisa Parsons speaks to attorneys and law professionals at a panel on working with clients living with mental illnesses.

Building Better Futures

Program staff served 220 new clients in the fiscal year. The complex problems facing this population are tremendously challenging to resolve. While social determinants of health affect all populations, research shows that individuals who are homeless, have been homeless, or are at risk of homelessness are more susceptible to social determinants of health, causing higher rates of chronic health conditions, mental illness, and substance use disorder, among many other risky health outcomes. This population is more likely to face extreme poverty as a result of a lack of housing, access to affordable health services, and access to basic needs like food. Many of the hundreds of clients served by program staff received awards of disability benefits and food assistance, providing critical income support and security to those living with complex health needs.

Homeless Program Director Lisa Parsons and staff attorneys Amanda Walsh and Sarah Hess present a training and research on trauma-informed advocacy at the 2017 Illinois Legal Advocates Conference in Chicago.



Following extensive research on the concept of trauma-informed advocacy, in 2017 program director Lisa Parsons and staff attorneys Sarah Hess and Amanda Walsh led a presentation titled "Trauma-Informed Advocacy: Practical Advice for Working with Vulnerable Populations" at the 2017 Illinois Legal Advocates Conference. The session provided tools for public interest attorneys to best engage clients with traumatic backgrounds and provided strategies to succeed in meeting client needs. One in two Legal Council clients are survivors of childhood trauma. Given the prominence of trauma in the populations we serve and given research that shows traumatic experiences often inhibit individuals from living healthy lives, Legal Council continues to be a leader in trauma-informed advocacy and a mentor for others in the legal aid community on this issue.

MEET A CLIENT: TINA

POLICY & ADVOCACY

Legal Council client Tina was a strong woman with an extensive history of trauma and was experiencing homelessness. Although Tina was strong, her troubled childhood and health issues made for a difficult adulthood and she was out of options. After Tina sought assistance from Legal Council, she shaped a new outlook on her life despite the obstacles she faced.

Tina had a long history of trauma that led her to meet one of Legal Council's attorneys at a homeless shelter. On her mother's request, she left school during 6th grade while only at a 4th-grade reading level. Tina's childhood was clouded with trauma including sexual and physical abuse. Tina lost her children to Child Protective Services because her family had nowhere to call home. Applying for jobs was a challenge for Tina because she had difficulty reading, but she found short-term jobs to make ends meet. However, Tina had no stability in her employment. She was diagnosed with depression and schizophrenia, and the arthritis in her knees made it difficult for her to stand for too long. Before meeting her Legal Council attorney, she applied for benefits twice and was denied both times.

Throughout her time with Legal Council, Tina's indomitable spirit never faltered. Legal Council won her claim for social security benefits. This was a huge step for her: finally, she had a steady source of income that would help her find reliable housing. She went from couch surfing and living on and off the streets to having a sense of security again.

In May 2018, Legal Council attorneys filed a motion on behalf of thousands of low-income Illinoisans illegally denied Medicaid coverage. The motion, filed in U.S. District Court in Chicago, asks the court to enforce an existing consent decree that requires the State to determine eligibility for Medicaid within federal timelines, and to offer temporary medical assistance to people whose application pend beyond the federal time limits (Cohen v. Wright).

Federal law requires the State of Illinois to process Medicaid applications within 45 days or to offer temporary assistance if a determination has not been made in that timeframe. However, eligible individuals were waiting for three to six months to have their applications processed and approved. Legal Council, alongside attorneys from the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law and Sidley Austin LLP, tried for months to resolve the issues without legal action, but were unable to compel the State to comply.

These massive Medicaid delays by the State can have life-threatening consequences: They prevent people from receiving life-saving surgeries, stop seniors from accessing medication, and keep newborn babies from being added to their parents' cases, forcing them to wait months for the care they need to ensure they are healthy.





Protecting Illinois Care

This past year, Legal Council continued its advocacy efforts as a lead agency in the Protect Our Care Illinois (POCIL) coalition. In response to direct attacks to affordable, quality health coverage, and federal Medicaid protections, including access to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Legal Council partnered with the more than 100 statewide agencies in POCIL to craft and promote legislation protecting the health of tens of thousands of Illinoisans. Some notable pieces of legislation include bills limiting the duration of short term insurance plans, which offer strict limitations like excluding coverage for pre-existing conditions, prescription drugs, and weekend hospital treatment, and a bill that would safeguard Illinoisans from federal Legal Council's Carrie Chapman (left) testifies in front of the Illinois House



attacks to coverage and benefits, such as Medicaid Human Services Appropriations Committee. "work requirements."

There remains much work to be done in defending health coverage and services. Through statewide collaboration, Legal Council will continue to do what is necessary to protect Illinoisans through state legislation and public outreach.

Protecting Illinois Families

In March, a leaked draft of a new "public charge" test outlined changes that would force families-including U.S. citizen children—to make an impossible choice between accessing health care, food, and shelter, and keeping their family in the U.S. Specifically, this test (like the current test) would be used for those who are seeking a green card or seeking to adjust to Lawful Permanent Resident status.

After viscous attacks to Illinois immigrant families, Legal Council became one of the founding members of Protecting Immigrant Families Illinois, a coalition advocating on behalf of families whose access to basic needs programs-like food, medical, and housing assistance—are threatened. Despite what policies or rules are thrown at us, we know that diversity is our nation's strength and makes our ideas better, our creativity stronger, and our communities richer.





MAJOR EVENTS, 2017-2018

August 2017: Legal Council hosts its annual summer party at Sidetrack in Lakeview. More than 300 attendees celebrated Mexico with the travel theme, *¡Bienvenidos!*





December 2017: Legal Council celebrates another successful year with Advocates Circle members at our annual winter party.

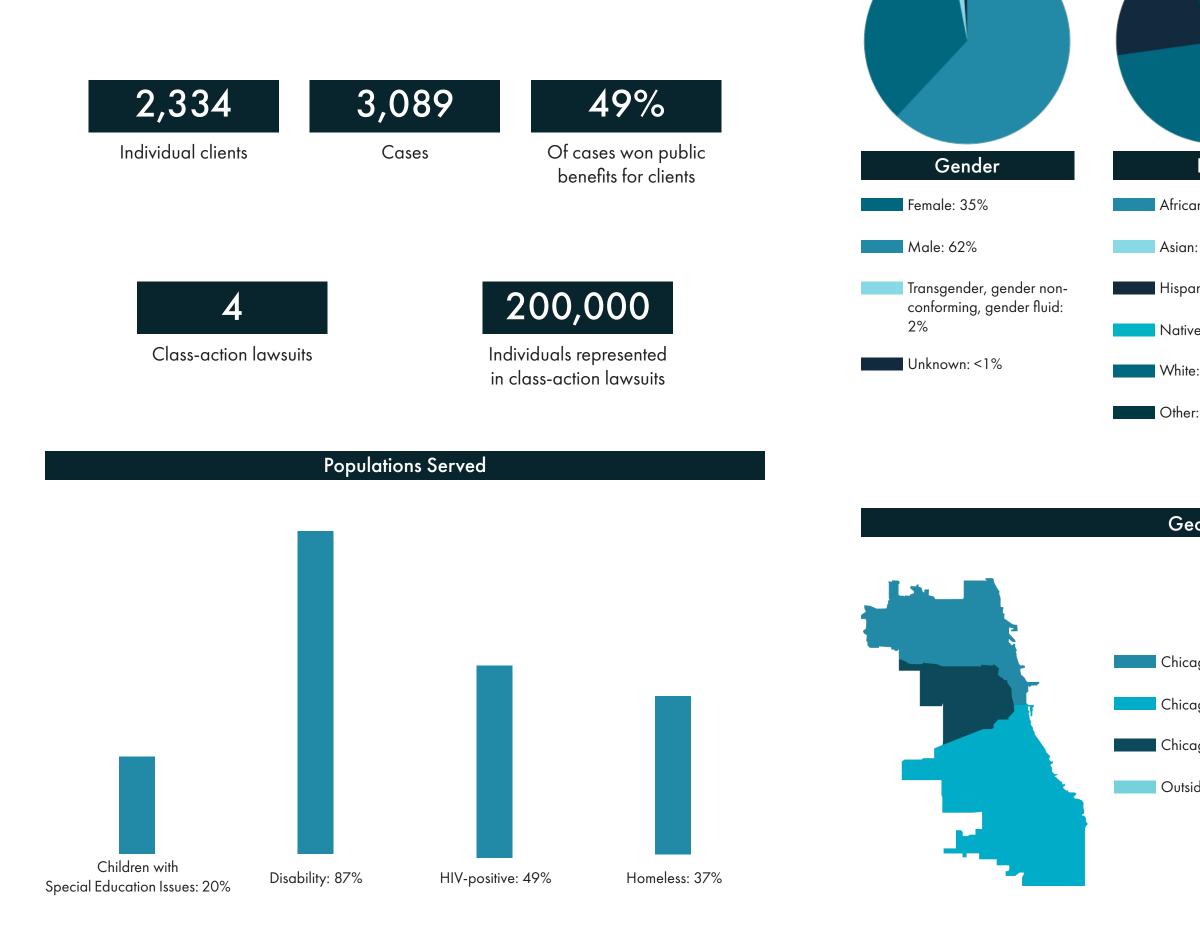
Legal Beagles returned to Soldier Field for the 2017 AIDS Run & Walk. We raised \$20,000, making us once again one of the top teams.

May 2018: The 4th Annual May Ball was bigger and better than ever before. Around 150 people attended this exclusive event dressed to the nines for this year's derby theme.

2/11

June 2018: The Chicago Spirit Brigade sponsored Legal Council at Chicago's annual Pride Festival and raised \$2,000 for our programs. Legal Council staff and friends also marched in the Pride Parade.

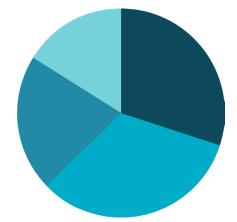
CLIENT AND CASE PROFILES



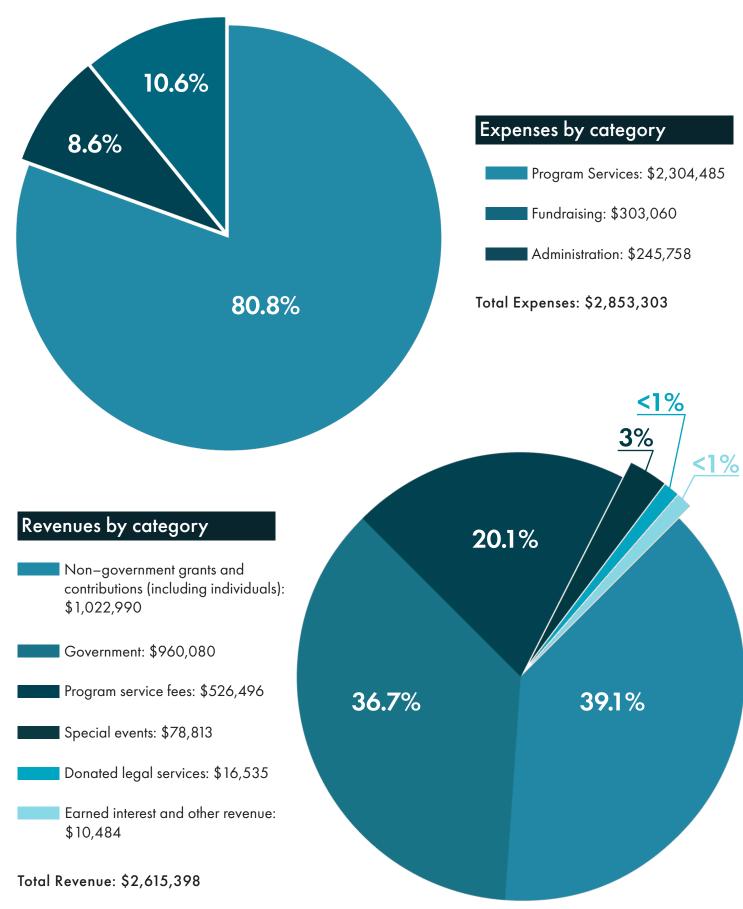
Race	Age
an-American: 52%	0-9: 14%
: 1%	10-17: 11%
unic: 19%	18-24: 6%
e: <1%	25-34: 12%
e: 21%	35-44: 15%
r: 6%	45-64: 39%
	65+: 3%

Geography

- Chicago North Side: 21%
- Chicago South Side: 33%
- Chicago West Side: 30%
- Outside of Chicago: 16%



FUNDING & ADMINISTRATION



FISCAL STATEMENT

Revenues and other support

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Non-government grants and contributions (including individuals)	\$210,615	\$812,375	\$1,022,990
Government grants	\$960,080	_	\$960,080
Program service fees	\$526,496	_	\$526,496
Special events	\$78,813	-	\$78,813
Donated legal services	\$16,535	_	\$16,535
Earned interest and other revenue	\$10,484	_	\$10,484
Net assets released from restrictions due to satisfaction of program restrictions	\$882,074	(\$882,074)	_
Total Revenue	\$2,685,097	\$69,699	\$2,615,398
Expenses		1	L
Program services	\$2,304,485	-	\$2,304,485
Administrative	\$245,758	_	\$245,758

Expenses		1	1
Program services	\$2,304,485	-	\$2,304,485
Administrative	\$245,758	_	\$245,758
Fundraising	\$303,060	_	\$303,060
Total Expenses	\$2,853,303	_	\$2,853,303
Change in net assets	\$168,206	\$69,699	\$237,905
Net assets, beginning of year	\$1,563,665	\$576,904	\$2,140,569
Net assets, end of year	\$1,395,459	\$507,205	\$1,902,664

BOARD OF AMBASSADORS

The Board of Ambassadors is a diverse group of dedicated professionals who help to increase awareness of Legal Council and to support its services for low-income people with HIV and other chronic, disabling and stigmatized health conditions, as well as our educational initiatives and advocacy programs.

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Illinois Department of Human Services

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University of Illinois-Chicago Coordination of Health Care for Complex Kids (CHECK)

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ACCESS Community Health Center for Housing and Health

\$10,000 - \$19,999

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Dr. Braden Berkey

The listing reflects gifts made during the 2018 fiscal year (July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018). We apologize for any inadvertent omissions—we appreciate all our supporters!

\$10,000+

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The T-Shirt Deli theWit Hotel Thousand Waves Martial Arts and Self Defense Center TimeLine Theatre Company Topo Gigio Ristorante Umami Burger Unabridged Bookstore Vaughn Hospitality Group Viaggio Virgin Hotels Chicago Waldorf-Astoria Chicago Walt Disney World White Sox Wilde Windy City Rollers WineHouse Wines for Humanity Women & Children First Wood Zanies Zeglio Custom Clothiers



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