



North Penn
LEGAL SERVICES

**LEVELING THE SCALES
OF JUSTICE**

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT



North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

LEVELING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

North Penn Legal Services (NPLS) is committed to helping low-income individuals and families in need of legal assistance. We advocate for our clients with direct legal representation, legal clinics, and developing and maintaining partners in the justice and human services community. NPLS helps to level the scales of justice by sharing our expertise in poverty law issues, and provides legal education and self-help materials through community outreaches and on nplspa.org.

WHAT WE DO

As a regional provider of civil legal aid for more than 57 years, NPLS helps low-income people throughout 20 counties in Northeast Pennsylvania. At the close of our 2021-2022 fiscal year, NPLS had 9 offices and 3 satellite locations, with a staff of 92, including 41 attorneys and 22 paralegals. The staff's goal is to provide effective and impactful representation and community partnerships to best educate and support our client-eligible population.

Services include individual representation, information and advice, community legal education, and support for those clients who take direct responsibility for handling some or all aspects of their legal problem.

Message from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Throughout Northeast Pennsylvania, NPLS provides thousands of clients with advice, brief services, and direct representation as they are dealing with serious civil legal problems that often threaten their health and well-being. Having access to legal help that specializes in these issues matters significantly in leveling the scales of justice for those living in poverty. The examples throughout this report depict the kinds of issues our clients faced with the help of an advocate and support from their local office.

This year, as we have in past years, we helped thousands of victims of domestic violence obtain protective orders, resolve custody disputes, and deal with legal issues that will promote their economic and housing security. And when survivors saw their children taken in violation of a court order, our attorneys assisted with emergency hearings and securing help from the courts and appropriate law enforcement.

As we continue to deal with the impact of the pandemic, the number one issue facing those living at or near poverty has been maintaining or securing safe and affordable housing. NPLS attorneys and volunteer private attorneys assisted tenants facing eviction hearings to resolve financial or basic habitability issues. We have looked for new ways to resolve these problems both before and after litigation is filed. This includes connecting with community partners for rental assistance, mediation services, and looking for long term solutions in our communities to promote stable and secure housing.

We thank our dedicated staff, donors, funders, community partners, and volunteers, including all the pro bono attorneys, students, and our Board of Directors, for their many contributions this year. Working together, we help to level the scales of justice for those in greatest need.

Lori A. Molloy
Lori A. Molloy
Executive Director



LEVELING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

Public Benefits: Children

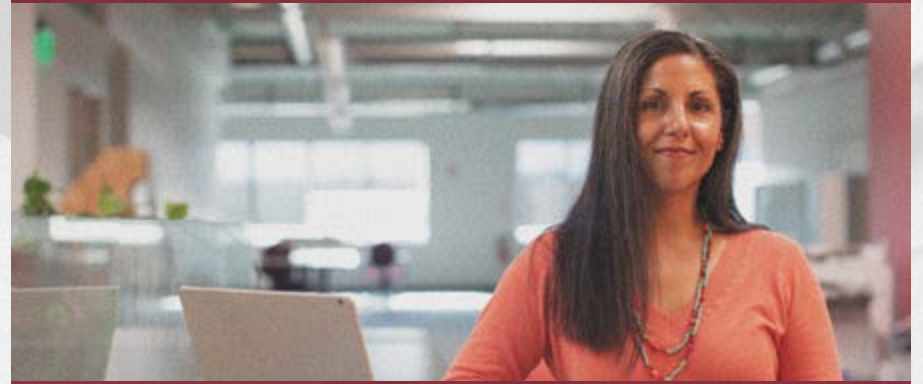
Elena applied for legal services after she was denied SSI (Supplemental Security Income) for her pre-school child three times and was awaiting a hearing before the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). She primarily speaks Spanish and knew she needed help with this hearing, as well as financial support to care for her child with disabilities. The child was in early intervention programs because of developmental delays and behavior issues.

NPLS's advocate obtained and reviewed treatment records and represented at a hearing several months later. At the hearing, the ALJ requested more evidence regarding school and behavioral treatment records. We were able to submit a teacher questionnaire and additional behavioral treatment records. The ALJ issued a fully favorable decision, and our client was awarded back benefits of approximately \$800 per month and 16 months of back benefits.



“Continue to speak out against all forms of injustice to yourselves and others, and you will set a mighty example for your children and for future generations.”

— BERNICE KING



“Justice consists not in being neutral between right and wrong, but in finding out the right and upholding it, wherever found, against the wrong.”

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT

LEVELING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

Unemployment Compensation

Annie suffered from health problems and took an approved leave from her work; she was on FMLA and received short-term disability for a time. After six months, her employer terminated her position. When she was able to work, she began looking for work and applied for UC benefits, and her employer objected. She was without unemployment benefits from her application date until the hearing before the referee, approximately 9 months.

The NPLS advocate provided advice when she filed her appeal and represented her at the contested referee hearing. The referee found in favor of our client and found that this was not a case where the client voluntarily quit her job. The purpose of unemployment compensation is to ensure those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own are able to have at least a portion of their income until they find new work. No appeal was filed, and back benefits of over \$17,000 were awarded to our client.

Partnerships IN THE COMMUNITY

IN 2021 – 2022, NPLS STRENGTHENED ITS PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP LEVEL THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

The NPLS website received 132,696 page views.

Visitors to npls.org accessed helpful information such as our Employment Handbook, Self-Help Handbook for Tenants, Family Law Handbook and custody videos.

2022 marked the tenth year of our annual “Raise a Glass To Justice” event, raising \$16,615 for legal aid. This was also NPLS’ first in-person event since the start of the pandemic, held outside at the historic Bethlehem Golf Club.

In the past year, we presented Continuing Legal Education via Distance Learning for pro bono attorneys on the following topics: Ethics of Pro Bono and the Changing Need During Disasters, Attacking Tax Sales Under the Real Estate Tax Sale Law, Representing Residential Tenants in Eviction Proceedings, Developing Legal Strategies for a Lead-Free Pennsylvania, and PFA Updates and Strategies for Pro Bono Attorneys.

In April 2022, NPLS hosted a virtual 2022 Healthy Homes Summit: Developing Legal Strategies for a Lead-Free Pennsylvania. The event, which included CLE credit, was divided into two parts: Defining the Scope of the Problem and Methods to Address the Problem, with presentations from the Community Justice Project, Pittsburgh, and Lead-Free Promise PA.

We thank the Northampton County Bar Association for their continued support during the last fiscal year.

NPLS continued our extensive outreaches with Head Start on public benefits and to community organizations on a range of legal issues, from barriers to employment for persons with criminal records, to housing law and conditions, to mortgage foreclosure and trainings for seniors.

NPLS reached more than 3,396 people at community outreach events during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. 3,692 legal education brochures and other materials were distributed.

“If we want a beloved community, we must stand for justice.”

— GLORIA JEAN WATKINS “BELL HOOKS”

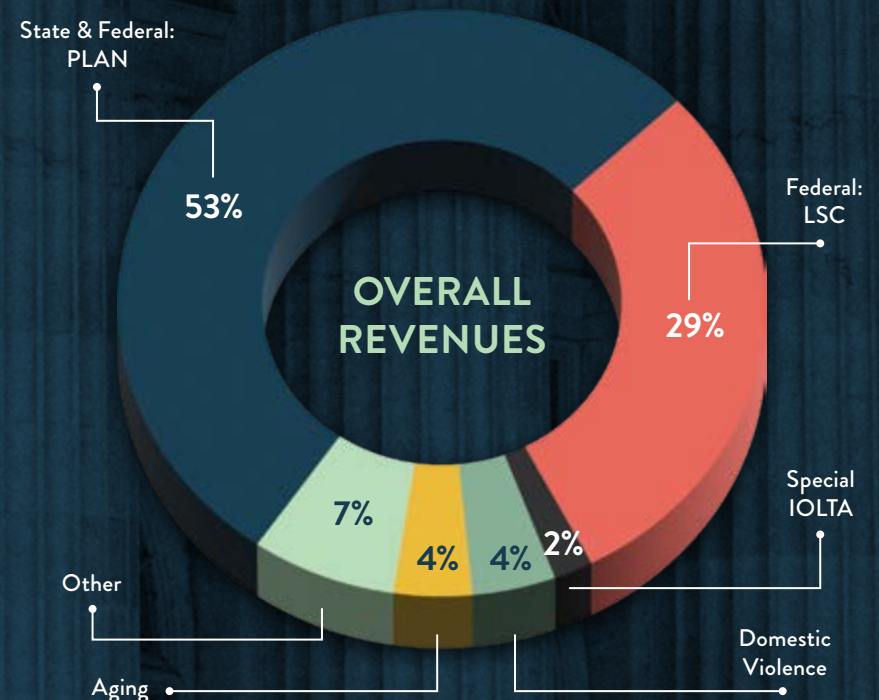
FINANCIAL POSITION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2022

(with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2021)

Revenues & Other Support	2022	2021
Contracts & Grants	\$8,443,636	\$8,092,014
Contributions of Financial Assets	53,141	116,580
Contributions of Nonfinancial Assets	102,090	127,434
Interest Income	4,419	4,658
Other	3,350	4,943
Net Contributions of Cash w/ Restrictions	32,232	N/A
Total Revenue & Other Support	\$8,638,868	\$8,345,629

Expenses	2022	2021
Program Services	\$7,752,583	\$7,398,382
Management & General	877,598	839,543
Fund Raising	2,444	9,486
Total Expenses	\$8,632,625	\$8,247,411



\$3.4
MILLION

AWARDED TO OR DEBT AVOIDED FOR OUR CLIENTS,
PRIMARYLY IN CONSUMER CASES IN 2021-2022.



1,929 CASES
LITIGATED IN
COURT

161 CASES LITIGATED
IN ADMINISTRATIVE
TRIBUNALS

598

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDERS OBTAINED



10,036
CASES
HANDLED

7,118
CASES
CLOSED

16,156

PEOPLE PROVIDED
WITH DIRECT SERVICES



90 PRIVATE ATTORNEYS ACCEPTED
254 PRO BONO CASES.

23 JUDICARE ATTORNEYS
ACCEPTED **189** CASES.

RESOURCE MATERIALS WERE
MADE AVAILABLE ON NPLS'
WEBSITE, WHICH RECEIVED
132,696 PAGE VIEWS.

5,804
ONLINE INTAKES
WERE RECEIVED



6,684 PEOPLE WITH HOUSING ISSUES HELPED
491 PREVENTED EVICTION / SHELTER PRESERVED

4,224 CLIENTS PROVIDED WITH COUNSEL
AND ADVICE OR LIMITED ACTION

Getting Results

NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS



LEVELING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

Custody and Domestic Abuse

NPLS represented several families who were involved in interstate custody matters and was able to assist in returning the child to the custodial parent and enforcing existing court orders. Often these cases involved domestic violence victims, who have recently left abusive situations. This is one case example: Janet was visiting with her four children in Pennsylvania when the children's father snatched one child while he was playing outside a family member's house. Although she had an out-of-state custody order, Janet was unable to get the police or any law enforcement agency to help her enforce the order.

She was finally referred to our office by the local domestic violence agency. The NPLS advocate was able to schedule an emergency hearing for enforcement of the Custody Order the next day. The client was able to get the sheriff's department to enforce the Order and was able to retrieve the child that afternoon and go back to her home state.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

— MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

LEVELING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

Landlord / Tenant

Lila was living in a rental property for some time when she fell behind on rent. Instead of filing an eviction action, as the law requires, the landlord told the municipality to turn off the water to the home. Then the municipality condemned the property for lack of running water. Lila and her young child were homeless and called NPLS.

The NPLS advocate immediately contacted the municipality's attorney to demand restoration of the water under the Utility Services Tenant's Rights Act. We also filed for injunctive relief so that the tenants could move back home. The parties were able to reach a settlement concerning the unlawful eviction and then enter a new lease agreement.

Tax Sale

Olive and her husband moved out-of-state temporarily when her husband lost his job, and started a new business with family there. The business was shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they soon discovered their home in Northeast PA had been sold at a tax sale.



NPLS advocates reviewed the file and saw that although the homeowner had given the tax claim office their temporary address, the homeowners were not properly served. We filed exceptions to the tax sale and were able to negotiate a settlement to set aside the tax sale. Further, a monthly payment agreement was reached to avoid future sale of the home. Olive and her husband were able to remain in their family home.

NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES

Locations

BRADFORD, SUSQUEHANNA & TIOGA COUNTIES

Towanda Office 21 Main Street, Towanda, PA 18848
P: 877-515-7732 ♦ F: 570-534-0976

CARBON & LUZERNE COUNTIES

Hazleton Office 101 W. Broad Street, Ste. 713, Hazleton, PA 18201
P: 570-455-9512 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7628 ♦ F: 570-455-3625

CLINTON, LYCOMING & TIOGA COUNTIES

Williamsport Office 25 W. 3rd St., Ste. 400, Williamsport, PA 17701
P: 570-323-8741 ♦ Toll Free: 800-326-7436 ♦ F: 570-323-5256

COLUMBIA & MONTOUR COUNTIES

Bloomsburg Office 168 E. 5th Street, Bloomsburg, PA 17815
P: 570-784-8760 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7079 ♦ F: 570-784-4840

LACKAWANNA, LUZERNE, SULLIVAN & WYOMING COUNTIES

Pittston Office 33 N. Main Street, Ste. 200, Pittston, PA 18640
P: 570-299-4100 ♦ Toll Free: 855-236-6405 ♦ F: 570-824-0001

LEHIGH & NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES

Bethlehem Office 559 Main St., Ste. 200, Bethlehem, PA 18018
P: 610-317-8757 ♦ F: 610-317-8778

MONROE & PIKE COUNTIES

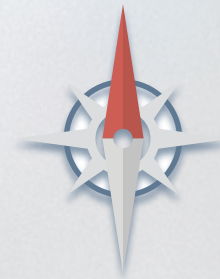
Stroudsburg Office 10 N. 10th Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360
P: 570-424-5338 ♦ Toll Free: 800-532-8282 ♦ F: 570-754-8508

NORTHUMBERLAND, SNYDER & UNION COUNTIES

Sunbury Office 133 N. 2nd Street, Sunbury, PA 17801
P: 570-286-5687 ♦ Toll Free: 877-515-7730 ♦ F: 570-286-2203

WAYNE COUNTY

Honesdale Office
Wayne County Courthouse, 925 Court St., Honesdale, PA 18431
P: 877-515-7465 ♦ F: 570-754-8510



North Penn LEGAL SERVICES

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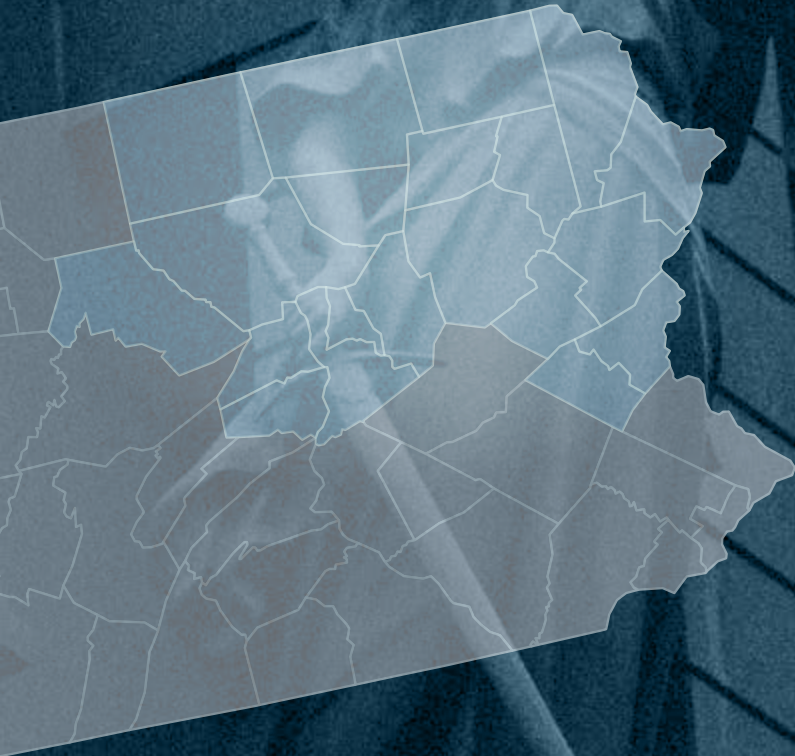
*“Poise the cause in justice's equal
scales, Whose beam stands sure,
whose rightful cause prevails.”*

— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Serving 20 Counties in
NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

BRADFORD ♦ CARBON ♦ CLINTON ♦ COLUMBIA ♦ LACKAWANNA
LEHIGH ♦ LUZERNE ♦ LYCOMING ♦ MONROE ♦ MONTOUR
NORTHAMPTON ♦ NORTHUMBERLAND ♦ PIKE ♦ SNYDER ♦ SULLIVAN
SUSQUEHANNA ♦ TIOGA ♦ UNION ♦ WAYNE ♦ WYOMING



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