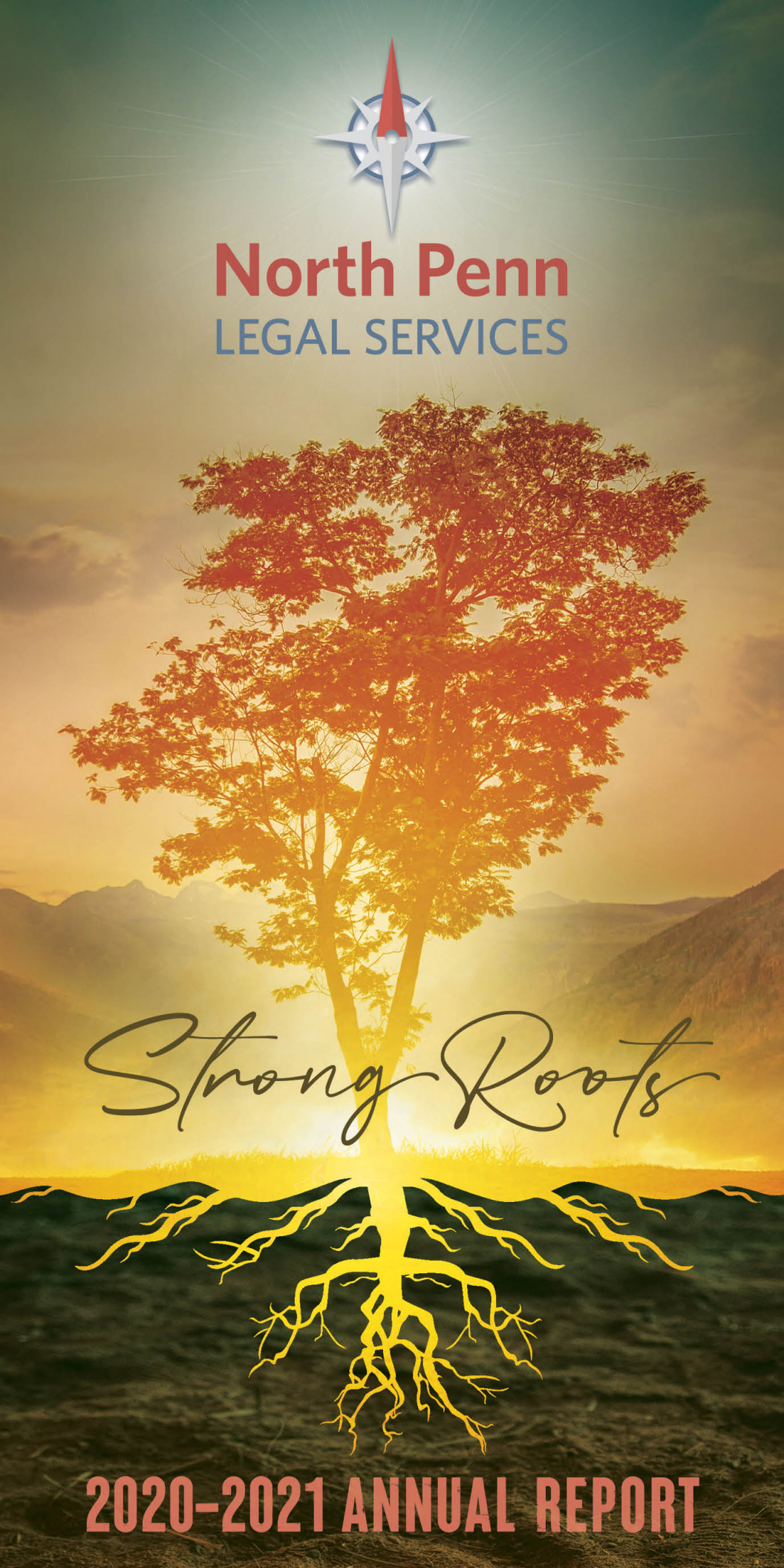
North Penn
LEGAL SERVICES



2020–2021 ANNUAL REPORT

North Penn
LEGAL SERVICES

Strong Roots IN EQUAL JUSTICE

North Penn Legal Services (NPLS) is committed to helping those in need to successfully overcome challenges they face in the justice system.

By acting as a guide through information, advice or representation, and by providing education and self-help materials through our community outreaches and on northpennlegal.org, NPLS demonstrates its strong roots in equal justice.

WHAT WE DO

As a regional provider of civil legal aid for more than 55 years, North Penn Legal Services helps low-income people throughout 20 counties in Northeast Pennsylvania.

NPLS has nine offices and four satellite locations, with a staff of 90, including 41 attorneys and 20 paralegals. The staff's goal is to provide access to the justice system.

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.

LSC America's Partner For Equal Justice

HIGHMARK

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

MESSAGE FROM THE *Executive Director*

Almost two years ago, we could not have imagined the ongoing impact of the pandemic on everyone in our communities. We have all lived with losses, including deaths of loved ones, health impacts, jobs, businesses, disrupted schooling, and family upheaval. Racial and ethnic minorities have been disproportionately impacted, and those with limited and fixed incomes have been particularly vulnerable. At every step, NPLS worked with thousands of clients to help them with their most pressing civil legal problems and collaborated to create access to existing and newly created programs that provided hope for assistance.

We highlight in this report some stories that describe our successes. They are reflective of the many clients who bravely and persistently sought to escape from abusive relationships, save their homes from tax sale, clear an old criminal record that was a barrier to employment, qualify for rental assistance, and protect themselves and their families from the trauma of eviction. The whole story is often much more complicated, and often involves zealous representation in court, along with cooperation and collaboration with so many in the community. Other non-profit social service agencies, courts, municipalities, caseworkers, families, and caregivers worked with our staff to ensure access to justice and resolution of civil problems, which are compounded by poverty.

We celebrated several staff who retired after spending decades working at NPLS, expanding pro bono programs and providing dedicated, caring assistance to thousands of clients. New funding allowed us to welcome additional staff equally committed to civil justice. We thank you, who have continued to support legal services for low income people in northeast Pennsylvania with donations, funding, pro bono, and volunteer services that ensure we can continue to address the critical needs of our clients and communities.

Lori A. Molloy
Executive Director



Strong Roots in Equal Justice

PRESERVATION OF HOUSING

PREVENTING EVICTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw many tenants like Sheryl, a single mother who had lost her job and was behind on her rent. The landlord sent a notice that her lease would not be renewed because of the rent arrears, and that an eviction would be filed. Sheryl applied for the county Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), but the property managers said they would not participate in the program. The ERAP program suggested they could not help without the cooperation of the owner.

The NPLS attorney advocated with the program to allow the payment to be made directly to the tenant, so that we could resolve the rent arrears when the case came to court. They agreed to do so, but further discussions with the owners were successful – they agreed to accept the ERAP funds directly and extended the tenant's lease. Sheryl and her family avoided the debt, the trauma of eviction, and the harm that comes from a record of eviction.

SAVING MY HOME

The only asset Margaret owned was the family home she inherited and had lived in for many years. There was no mortgage, but she fell behind on the property taxes because of her limited income, and it got much worse when she lost her part-time work because of the pandemic. She called NPLS when she realized that her home had been sold at tax sale for less than 10% of its estimated value.

The NPLS attorney reviewed her case and realized that there was a significant legal error in the case, and filed an objection to the tax sale. We were able to reach a settlement that allowed our client to pay a portion of the taxes and a small monthly amount while she applied for the elderly homeowner deferral program. Margaret was relieved to be able to stay in her home and learn about programs that could help her.

Strong Roots in Equal Justice

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Cathy had filed for Protection from Abuse on behalf of herself and her two children, but the case was dismissed after the hearing. When she filed a second time, alleging continued, repeated abuse, she applied for legal representation. The NPLS attorney was able to obtain a continuance for the hearing because of an ongoing police investigation, over the defendant's objection.

The defendant was charged with multiple criminal charges. We were able to negotiate an extension of the temporary order until the criminal charges were resolved. After the defendant pled guilty, we represented in court and obtained a custody order, which protected the family from further contact and abuse.



Partnerships IN THE COMMUNITY

IN 2020 – 2021 NPLS STRENGTHENED ITS PARTNERSHIPS & OPENED DOORS TO JUSTICE.

The NPLS website received 152,755 page views. Visitors to northpennlegal.org accessed helpful information such as our Employment Handbook, Self-Help Handbook for Tenants, Family Law Handbook, and custody videos.

2020 marked the ninth year of our annual "Raise a Glass To Justice" event, raising $15,850 for legal aid. This was also NPLS' first virtual fundraising event, held live via Zoom due to COVID-19 concerns.

NPLS reached more than 2,900 people at community outreach events during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. 5,181 legal education brochures and other materials were distributed.

In the past year, we presented Continuing Legal Education via Distance Learning for pro bono attorneys on **Ethics of Pro Bono and the Changing Need During Disasters.**

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 presented 11 Distance Learning CLEs for the community (including four during the virtual Fair Housing Summit). We also participated in the Pro Bono CLE Pilot Program, where 51 pro bono attorneys assisted NPLS in 2021 and earned 106 CLE credits.

In April 2021, NPLS hosted a virtual Fair Housing Summit - The Future of Fair Housing. We presented four separate programs to over 500 total participants - some attended all sessions and others joined for one or more sessions. These included presentations by NPLS staff on Landlord Tenant Law and Fair Housing, with emphasis on COVID-related challenges. An expert in LGBT rights provided a session on the evolution of fair housing and the LGBT community. Another session focused on medical marijuana and housing policy. And a fourth session presented by the director of the Housing Equality Center of Pennsylvania focused on current trends in fair housing testing, HUD policy, and Compliance, including common fair housing violations in race, disability, and familial discrimination.

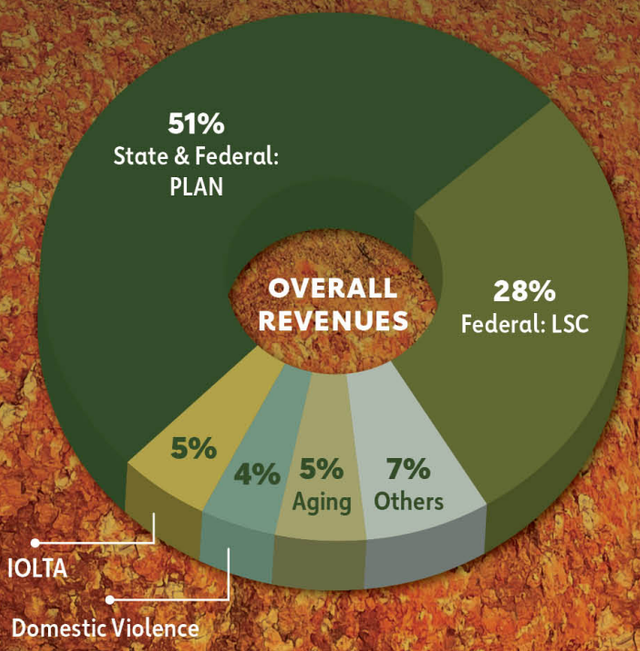
FINANCIAL POSITION

YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2021

(with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2020)

Revenues & Other Support	2021	2020
Contracts & Grants	$8,092,014	$6,365,491
Contributions: In Kind	116,580	149,505
Other	127,434	18,175
Interest Income	4,658	6,516
Other	4,943	824,252
Total Revenue & Other Support	**$8,345,629**	**$7,363,939**

Expenses	2021	2020
Program Services	$7,398,382	$6,625,966
Management & General	839,543	758,017
Fund Raising	9,486	10,854
Total Expenses	**$8,247,411**	**$7,394,837**



NORTH PENN LEGAL SERVICES

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS



Getting Results

$2.9 MILLION

AWARDED TO OR DEBT AVOIDED FOR OUR CLIENTS,
PRIMARILY IN CONSUMER CASES.

5,419
ONLINE INTAKES WERE RECEIVED

Resource materials were made available on NPLS' website, which received **152,755** page views.

3,582 CLIENTS PROVIDED WITH COUNSEL & ADVICE OR LIMITED ACTION

8,996
CASES HANDLED

6,107
CASES CLOSED

15,488
PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH DIRECT SERVICES

98 private attorneys accepted **317** Pro Bono cases.

35 Judicare attorneys accepted **224** cases.

577 PROTECTION FROM ABUSE ORDERS OBTAINED

356 CUSTODY & VISITATION ORDERS OBTAINED

- **1,733** cases litigated in court
- **146** cases litigated in administrative tribunals
- **5,463** people with housing issues helped by NPLS staff

Strong Roots in Equal Justice

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Pam sought help to clean up her criminal record, a summary charge of retail theft that was on her record for over twenty years. It caused her embarrassment and lost job opportunities, but she was discouraged from seeking an expungement because of objections raised by the local district attorney.

When a new District Attorney took office, NPLS advocates met with the DA and discussed problems facing clients with expungements and the long lasting impact they have for our clients. NPLS helped Pam file an expungement petition, the District Attorney's office did not object, and the court entered an order expunging the record. This allowed Pam to get a better job she had been hoping for, but which was only available if she had her record expunged.



SAFETY, STABILITY, & WELL-BEING

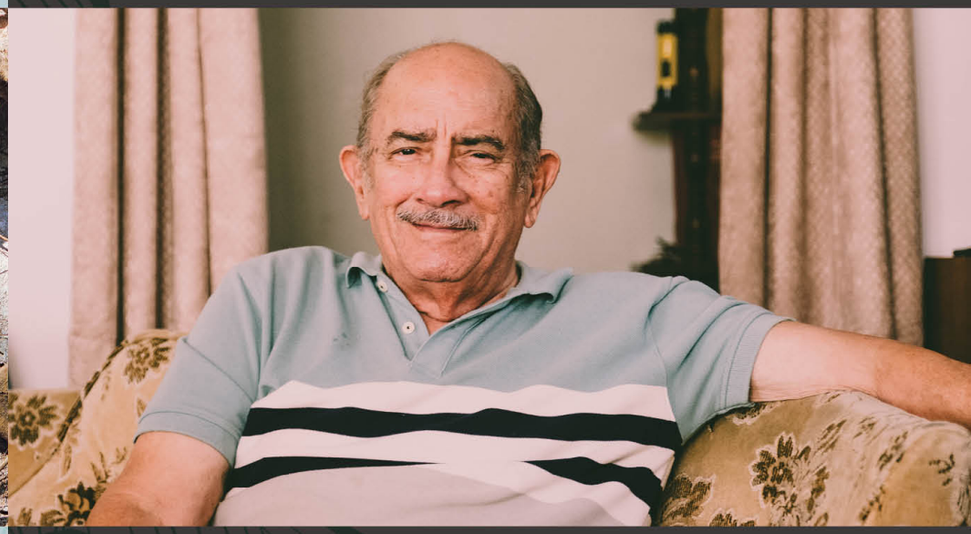
Joni had been unable to work for two years after suffering significant trauma during an extremely abusive relationship. She had already been denied social security benefits three times when she was referred to our program by the local domestic violence agency. Suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and a chronic health condition, she was dependent upon her mother for care and financial support of herself and her young child.

Joni worked with our attorney, who specializes in legal issues impacting domestic violence survivors. With thorough reviews of her medical records, encouragement to resume counseling during the pandemic, and representation before the Administrative Law Judge, Joni was approved for monthly benefits and a lump sum payment. Her monthly income tripled, which helped ensure stability and access to care for herself and her family.

Strong Roots in Equal Justice

ASSISTANCE TO POPULATIONS WITH SPECIAL VULNERABILITIES

Carl contacted NPLS because he was sued for more than $7,000. Carl is a disabled sixty-five year old man, living on a fixed income of less than 100% of the federal poverty guidelines. The collection agency called him and asked him to make a payment agreement, but with his limited income, he couldn't afford a payment. The NPLS attorney represented at the magisterial district court, and was able to successfully defend the lawsuit. Carl had been very worried about this debt and was grateful that the matter was resolved.





BRADFORD & SUSQUEHANNA COUNTIES

Towanda Office 213 Main Street, Ste. 1, 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

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North Penn
LEGAL SERVICES


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Northampton ✦ Northumberland ✦ Pike ✦ Snyder ✦ Sullivan
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