



*Advancing Equity in Sonoma County Since 1958*



# 2021 Annual Report

# LEGAL AID OF SONOMA COUNTY

**Our mission is to promote social justice and advance basic rights for vulnerable people in our community.**



Today, long overdue conversations about equity are becoming more common and widespread. At Legal Aid, our work pursuing equal justice under the law for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, economic, or social status, has always been rooted in equity. Recognizing that the playing field has been systematically unequal for centuries, true justice seeks to right this imbalance of power and opportunity.

Over the past year, we have upheld these values by helping over 792 people hold onto their housing, 1,554 people stand up to abuse, and 966 people leverage over \$3,332,750 million to help pay for housing, food, and health care.

Because of your support, today there are veterans and seniors living at home rather than in institutions, and there are children sleeping in their beds, rather than in cars. This report touches on a few of those successes, a testament to what is possible when committed staff, board members, and donors come together to advance equity and justice in Sonoma County.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronit Rubinoff".

Ronit Rubinoff  
Executive Director

## LEGAL AID TEAM



# Legal Aid operates nine programs and advocates to build safer, healthier, more equitable communities across Sonoma County.

Personal Health & Safety ■ Income Maintenance ■ Housing Stability

## Child Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP)

Helps non-parental caregivers obtain legal guardianship to protect children from abuse and neglect.

## Disaster Relief Program (DRP)

Helps community members impacted by the wildfires and COVID19 access relief aid and support.

## Elder Law Program (ELDER)

Helps seniors protect themselves from abuse, obtain public benefits, and preserve their housing.

## Employment & Health Program (EHP)

Assists people in addressing legal barriers to employment or better health.

## Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)

Helps homeless community members remove legal barriers to access housing.

## Housing Stability Program (HOME)

Helps with evictions, housing vouchers, and issues affecting safe and healthy housing.

## Veterans' Benefits Program

Helps veterans obtain financial, housing, and health benefits.

## Medical Legal Partnership

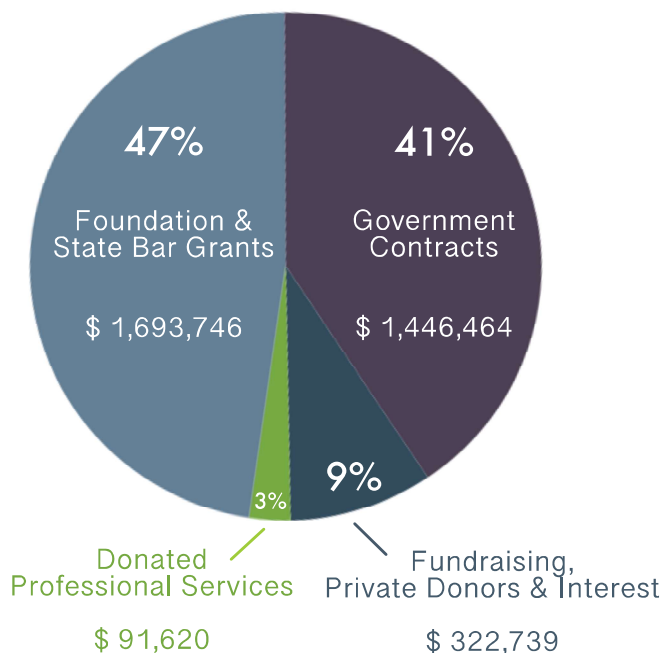
Provides legal assistance to address the health needs of patients.

## Violence Prevention Program (SAFE)

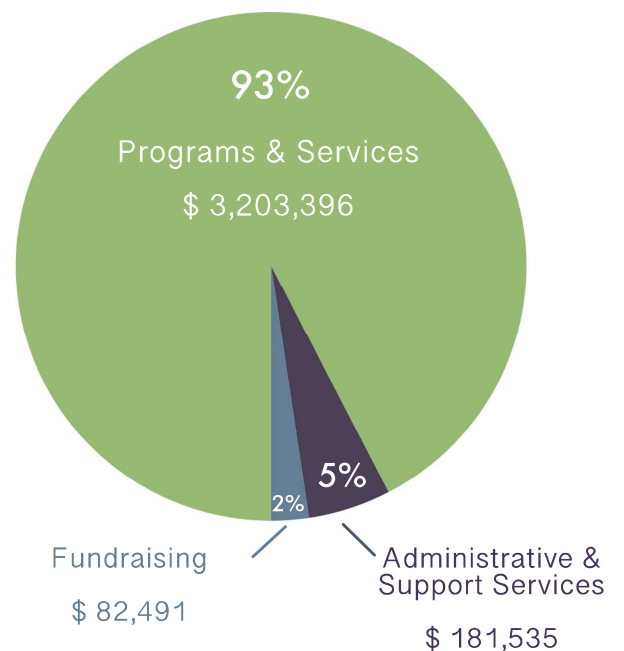
Helps those facing violence with protective orders and other legal remedies.

## 2021 FINANCIALS

**Revenue: \$3,554,569**



**Expenses: \$ 3,467,422**



# IMPACT

Your generous support helped us reach over  
**7,876** community members.



## HOUSING

Over **792** people were able to hold on to their housing in the midst of a global pandemic.



## BENEFITS

Vulnerable community members facing hardships received **\$510,700** in housing, disability, and veterans' benefits.



## DISASTER RECOVERY

Disaster survivors recovered **\$2,822,050** in insurance and other benefits.



## SAFETY

Helped protect over **1,554** women, children, and seniors from violence and abuse.



## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Legal Aid reached over **4,450** community members via outreach presentations and legal clinics.



## CALLS RECEIVED

Legal Aid staff responded to **11,154** calls.

2021

# REACH

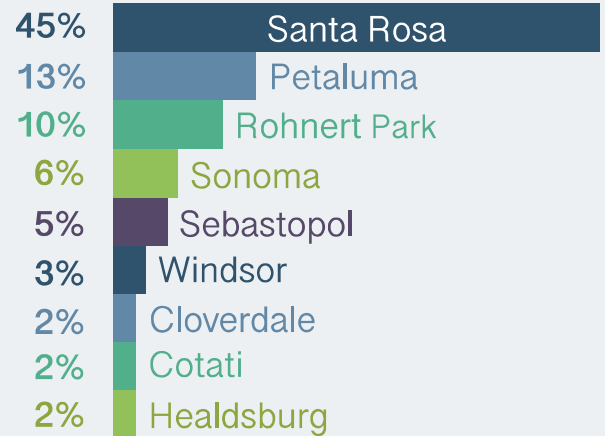
This is a snapshot of the clients who were directly served in 2021.

## By Income Level

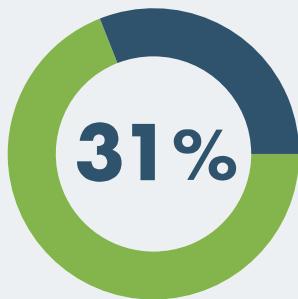
Based on the Average Median Income (AMI) for Sonoma County



## By Residence

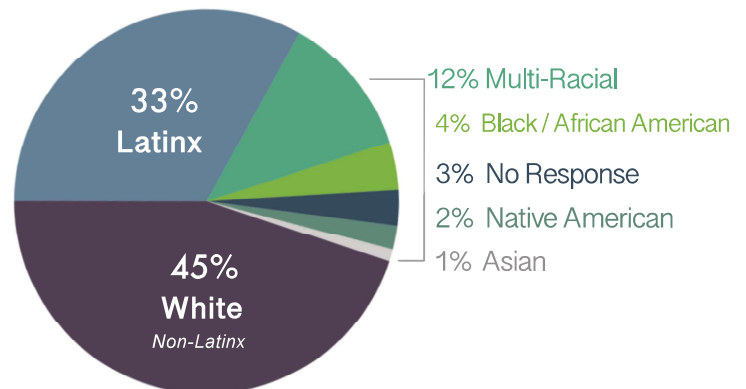


## By Disability Status

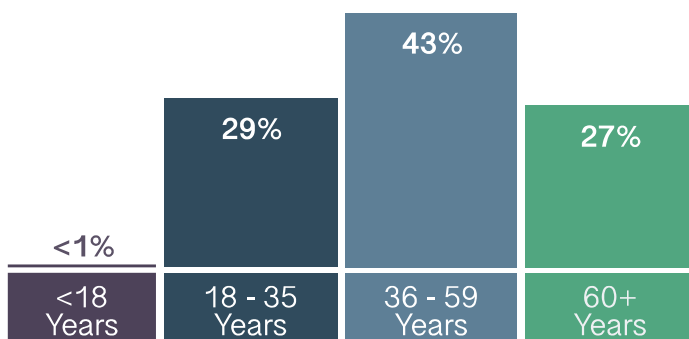


Reported living with a disability

## By Race & Ethnicity



## By Age Group



## By Households with Minors

44%



of clients served had minors in the home

# LEGAL AID IN ACTION

To: Chris, Amy & Patrick,

This is to acknowledge you for the outstanding commitment you all make, on a daily basis for humanity in need. Thank you so much for your assistance and professional delivery regarding my rental issues. I will always remain appreciative for your organization and will carry that giving spirit to spread more love and solutions to the people that are in need.

Thank you so much!

Linda Lechessa

"I am so grateful that I found the services of Legal Aid as I am going through a very stressful experience. **Maggie Barber** has been incredibly kind, helpful, and a great resource in answering all my questions during and after she put together my restraining order paperwork.

I honestly would have felt so lost and would not have known what to do without guidance through this. I had reached out to a few places and received no help until Legal Aid took my case. The Legal Aid program is such a necessity for people like me who didn't know what to do or where to turn."

- SAFE Program Client



"Iden and Ella were uprooted when they lost their home in the 2017 fires. They are very low income seniors with no other assets and were underinsured. To make matters worse, when it came time to rebuild their manufactured home, the contractor took their \$124,000 deposit and did virtually no work. Ida and Ella had no way of paying for an attorney, no home, and were about to lose their limited savings. Legal Aid intervened and forced the unlawful contractor to return the deposit. Iden and Ella will now have a home again."

- William Crean  
Legal Aid Disaster Relief Attorney

# IN THEIR WORDS...



"My sister Tammy died 13 years ago, on November 8, 2008. She worked with domestic violence survivors. Every year, the Legal Aid phone-a-thon takes place, near the anniversary of my beloved sister's death. I honor her memory by helping raise money for Legal Aid."

- Robin M. Estes  
Certified Family Law Specialist  
Law Offices of Robin M. Estes

"I love working with people who are caring and support the mission of the organization. The work is meaningful and there is nothing better than having a client tell you that you helped them stay in their home or that you helped them figure out a way to move forward through a difficult period. I feel honored and grateful to be a part of Legal Aid."

- Claire Morel-Seytoux  
Legal Aid Housing Attorney



"Sonoma County Legal Aid's Disaster Law Project (DLP) helps low income community members impacted by the 2017/2019 fires and the COVID-19 pandemic, to recover their housing, health, and economic stability through legal advocacy. Legal Aid of Sonoma County has helped with fire insurance claims, contractor issues, COVID related employment issues, public benefits access, and eviction prevention. Their work has been essential to the fire recovery strategy in our community."

- Alena Wall, MA, CHES  
Public Affairs Director  
Kaiser Permanente, Marin-Sonoma Service Area



# THANK YOU

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Chris Grabill**  
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SRJC Fire Resiliency  
Program



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Fogarty



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Attorney at Law



**John Farrow**  
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**Ann Hudson**  
Exchange Bank



**Chris Smith**  
Retired Columnist

## MAJOR FUNDERS

- AARP Foundation
- Bigglesworth Family Fund
- Casteel Family Foundation
- Coddling Foundation
- Community Foundation Sonoma County
- County of Sonoma
- Crane, Thomas
- Dickenson Peatman & Fogarty
- Exchange Bank
- Ginny & Peter Haas Fund
- Farrow Commercial, Inc.
- Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
- Family Justice Center Sonoma County Foundation
- The Craig & Kathryn Hall Foundation
- Healdsburg Forever Fund
- Impact 100 Redwood Circle
- Jackson Family Fund
- John Jordan Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kelly, Michael
- Poppy Bank
- City of Santa Rosa
- Sisters of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation
- Soiland Charitable Fund
- Spaulding, Gregory & Peggy
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- St. Joseph Health Community Benefit Fund
- State Bar of California
- Summit State Bank
- Trione, Victor
- Van Loben Sels/Rembe Rock Foundation



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