

MLSC

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

40
1982-2022



ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

MLSC AT 40

THE MISSION OF THE MARYLAND LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION IS TO ENSURE LOW-INCOME MARYLANDERS HAVE ACCESS TO STABLE, EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO NONPROFIT LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS.



IN 1982, responding to the instability of federal funding for civil legal services, the Maryland General Assembly passed bills to create the Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program to fund civil legal services and to create MLSC as an independent nonprofit to administer the funds and make grants to providers on the ground.

Later that year, Governor Harry Hughes appointed the first nine-member board of directors. In 1984, MLSC made its initial grants to four organizations, totaling just over \$300,000.

In FY 2022, having weathered 40 years of financial ups and downs, national and international hardships, and a global pandemic, MLSC made grant awards totaling over \$22.5 million to 37 organizations – including all of the first four.

Senator Guy Guzzone and Deb Seltzer, executive director of MLSC. Senator Guzzone read a resolution of the Maryland Senate's congratulations on MLSC's 40th Anniversary.

Baltimore City
BALTIMORE BAR
FOUNDATION SENIOR
LEGAL SERVICES
Operating Grant

The client, a 68-year-old veteran, was displaced by an eminent domain seizure and received funding for alternative housing. He was exploited by his new landlord and came to SLS for help as his rent money was running out. SLS investigated and helped him become eligible for benefits to provide housing, food, and medical care. His landlord continued to exploit him, intercepted his mail, and tried to become his financial agent and Social Security Representative Payee. SLS created a support team that included an attorney, a social worker from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and a representative from a city agency with housing funding to help him move to a safer long-term home.

DEAR FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES,

As we celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2022, we at Maryland Legal Services Corporation reflected on our past and planned for things to come. We returned to an in-person awards reception for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, at which we celebrated those who helped establish MLSC, recognized current leaders in the civil legal aid field and highlighted advocates with bright futures.

Thanks to dramatic increases in interest rates, and therefore growth in revenue from Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA), MLSC was able to increase grant funding in FY22, restoring cuts that were made when the pandemic caused a severe drop in income. Those funding increases could not have come at a better time – like many organizations across the country, MLSC’s grantees are feeling the effects of the tight labor market, and the longstanding gap between nonprofit legal services employee salaries and those in the government or private legal field has widened.

We are committed to working with our grantees to address this gap, and in fact have already made a round of supplemental funding to support salary increases. Helping grantees recruit and retain talented staff is a key priority to ensure Marylanders in need have access to the highest quality legal services. Are you or someone you know looking for a career change? Check out the Jobs section of our website (www.mlsc.org), where we post meaningful civil legal aid jobs for attorneys, paralegals and more.

Throughout the course of the year, MLSC received state and federal grant awards, as well as appropriated state funds, to launch the Access to Counsel in Evictions program and fund other important work. MLSC has worked closely with our grantees, the ACE Task Force, and state and local partners to kick off implementation of the ACE program, and we look forward to expansion across the state next year.

Thank you for your ongoing support of MLSC. We look forward to continuing to work together toward access to justice for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sidney A. Butcher".

Hon. Sidney A. Butcher
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Seltzer".

Deb Seltzer
Executive Director

IN FISCAL YEAR 2022

MLSC made \$22.5 million in operating, Judicare & special project grants to **37 nonprofits** serving low-income Marylanders.

MLSC grantees closed cases in all **24 Maryland jurisdictions.**

Our grantees closed over **75,000 cases** (up 26.5% from FY21), benefiting **140,820 people.**

Over **2,650 attorneys** donated more than **65,750 hours of service.**

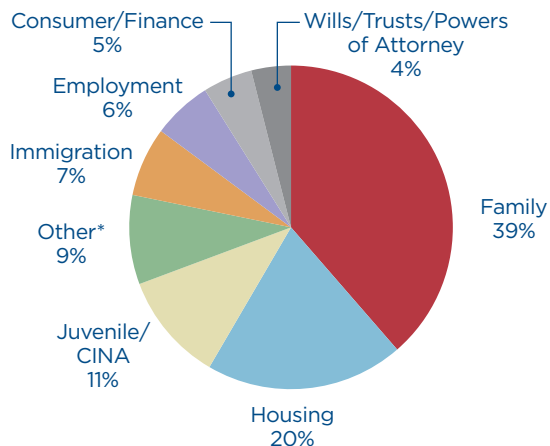
Legal aid providers helped clients obtain more than **\$51 million in economic awards** and avoid nearly **\$19 million** in costs through their cases, for issues such as child support, consumer judgments and discharged debts.

Baltimore County MARYLAND LEGAL AID Operating Grant

A client, the mother and primary caregiver for her 5-year-old son, sought help from Maryland Legal Aid after the child's father refused to bring him home, prevented him from communicating with his mother, and moved to an unknown location. The child missed several appointments, and his father did not enroll him in school. Legal Aid presented evidence to show she is a fit and proper parent. The Court agreed with Legal Aid's argument and awarded the mother sole legal custody and primary physical custody of the child.

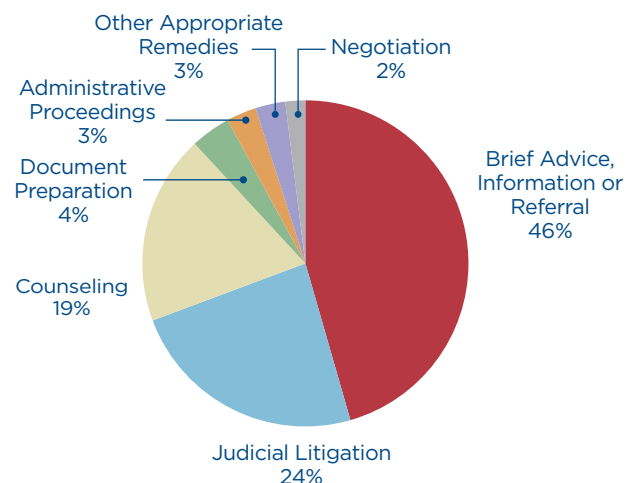
For historical reasons, past annual reports have included the brief advice statistics of Maryland Center for Legal Assistance, a wholly owned subsidiary of Maryland Legal Aid. For increased clarity, these statistics are not included in this report.

TYPES OF CLOSED CASES



*Education, health, individual rights, income maintenance, and miscellaneous.
Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

TYPES OF SERVICE



Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

MLSC GRANTEES

In the spring of 2022, MLSC approved for the coming fiscal year \$18,067,753 in operating and intern grant awards to 36 organizations. In addition, through a \$2,091,000 grant from the Administrative Office of the Courts and other funds, MLSC approved funding in the amount of \$2,441,000 for the continuation of the Judicare project, which pays reduced fees to private attorneys for contested family law representation. Also, MLSC awarded funding of \$577,445 restricted for foreclosure prevention and \$1,059,269 restricted for workforce legal services, as well as new funding of \$2,000,000 restricted for immigration legal services. With Phase 1 funding of the Access to Counsel in Evictions program and other money, MLSC awarded \$8,114,458 for eviction prevention projects, as well as \$1,069,709 for first-year funding of a coordinated intake system pilot for Access to Counsel in Evictions. In the fall of 2022, bolstered by stronger-than-anticipated IOLTA earnings, MLSC approved one-time grants totaling \$1,081,845 and supplemental grants designed to help grantees adjust staff compensation totaling \$3,316,684. More information about the grant process, application deadline, and current grants are available at www.mlsc.org.

- Allegany Law Foundation
- Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center
- Ayuda
- Baltimore Bar Foundation Senior Legal Services
- Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition
- CASA, Inc.
- Catholic Charities of Baltimore
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington
- Citizens Assisting and Sheltering the Abused (CASA)
- Community Law Center
- Community Legal Services of Prince George's County
- Disability Rights Maryland
- Equal Justice Works
- FreeState Justice
- Harford County Bar Foundation
- Heartly House
- Homeless Persons Representation Project
- HopeWorks of Howard County
- House of Ruth Maryland
- Life Crisis Center
- Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center
- Maryland Legal Aid
- Maryland Public Interest Law Project
- Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service
- Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence
- Mid-Shore Pro Bono
- Montgomery County Bar Foundation
- Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland
- Public Justice Center
- Sexual Assault Legal Institute
- Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center (SARC)
- Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy
- St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center
- Tahirih Justice Center
- United Way of Central Maryland
- University of Baltimore Foundation
- University of Baltimore Law Housing Justice Fellowship Program
- University of Maryland Carey School of Law Eviction Prevention Clinic
- University of Maryland Carey School of Law Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic
- Whitman-Walker Health
- Women's Law Center of Maryland

Frederick County **HEARTLY HOUSE** Operating Grant

A client in her 70's divorced her abuser this past year. The client filed a divorce complaint three prior times (once with a private attorney) but always backed out at the merits hearing due to the abuser's control and manipulation of the client. This time, with support and advocacy from her Heartly House attorney and advocate, she followed through and continues to stand up to her abuser after years of physical and mental abuse.

2022 CLOSED CASES BY COUNTY

Allegany 1,197

JUDICARE - Allegany Law Foundation

A twenty-year-old client was seeking full custody of her three siblings. Their mother had passed away unexpectedly, and their father was incarcerated. She needed assistance navigating the legal system to ensure she was able to receive services for her siblings and act as their guardian. After being placed through Allegany Law Foundation, she received representation from one of their participating attorneys, and was granted custody of her siblings.

Washington 1,840

Garrett 370

Frederick 2,220

Carroll 780

Howard 1,193

Montgomery 9,415

EVICITION PREVENTION - CASA, Inc.

A single mother of three received multiple court summons for back rent. She had lost work during Covid, and CASA connected her to rental assistance, which resolved her cases and provided relief of nearly \$19,000. More troubling were the landlord's bad practices. They sent threatening notices called EVICTION ORDERS on bright colored paper. These contained misleading claims at a time when no hearing had yet taken place. CASA forced the landlord to stop issuing the deceptive notices and convinced them to remove \$1,848.50 in illegal fees.

Prince George's 16,050

Charles 1,484

St Mary's 1,285

OPERATING - Public Justice Center

A second-grade client with autism experienced ongoing behavior challenges, following a first-grade year disrupted by Covid, and was removed repeatedly from the classroom and suspended out of school. Public Justice Center successfully challenged the suspension due to the district's failure to follow state law, and the suspension was removed from his record. They also helped him obtain a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), to help staff better support him. His behavior has improved significantly, and he is no longer frequently missing class for behavior-related reasons.

TYPES OF GRANTS

OPERATING

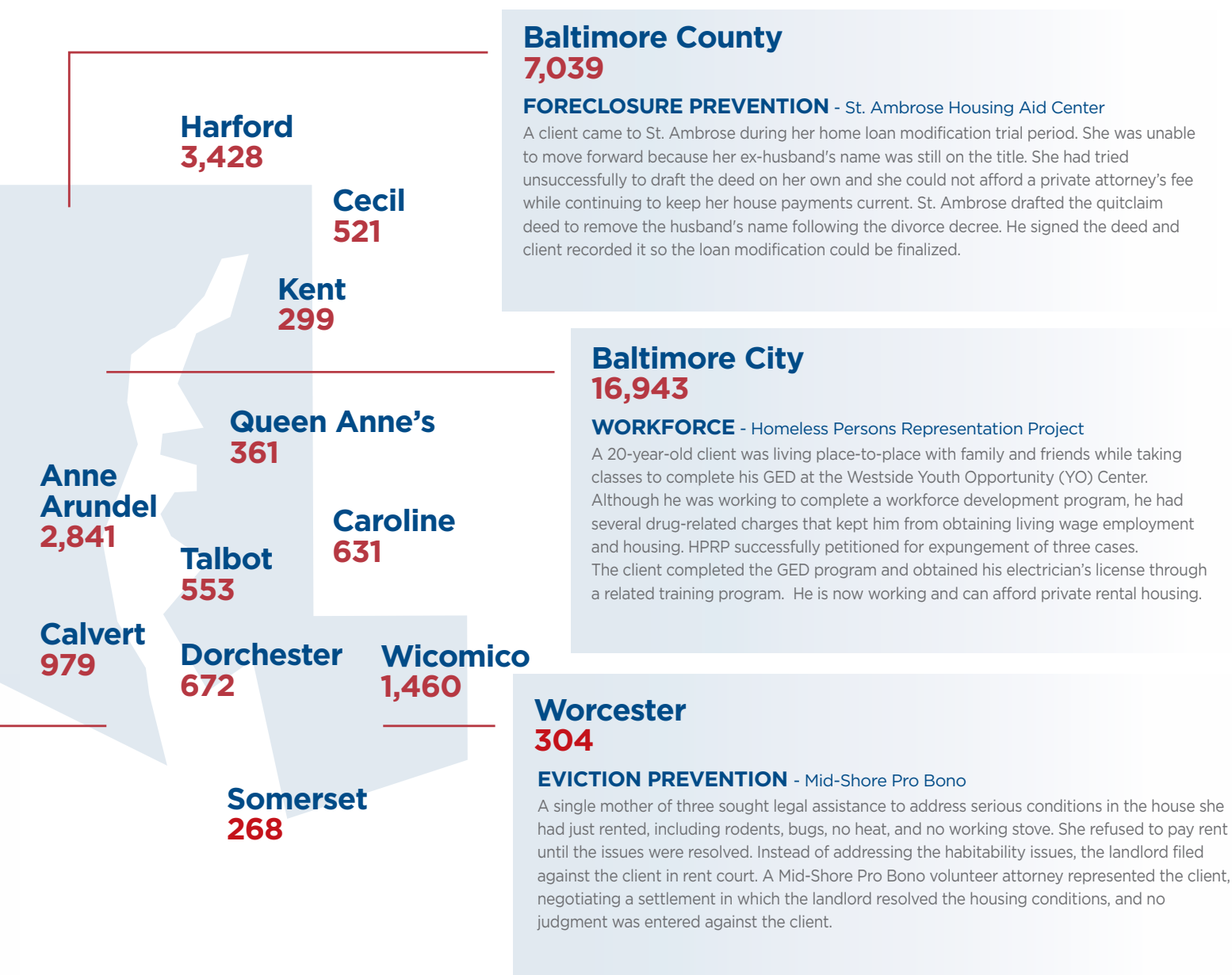
Part of MLSC's unique mission is to provide operating funding, helping legal services nonprofits across the state to keep their lights on and the lights of justice burning.

INTERNSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

MLSC also funds internships for law students and fellowships for eviction defense attorneys, investing in a pipeline of public interest attorneys for years to come.

JUDICARE

The Maryland Judicare program, administered by MLSC and substantially funded through a grant from the Maryland Judiciary's Access to Justice Department, pays private attorneys reduced fees to accept contested family law cases.



FORECLOSURE PREVENTION

MLSC's Foreclosure Prevention Grant funds nonprofits serving low-income Marylanders facing foreclosure, as well as low-income tenants facing displacement due to their landlord's foreclosure.

WORKFORCE

With the Workforce Legal Services Grant, MLSC funds grantees to embed legal service providers at job training and other workforce development sites.

EVICITION PREVENTION

This project funds full representation of tenants in judicial litigation or administrative proceedings. Going forward this project will include Maryland's new statutory Access to Counsel in Evictions program.

ANNUAL AWARDS

Each year MLSC solicits nominations and presents awards to individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to the provision of legal services to low-income Marylanders. MLSC held its annual reception on November 14, 2022 at Westminster Hall in Baltimore. This was the first in-person awards ceremony since the beginning of the pandemic. MLSC Board Chair Hon. Sidney Butcher and Supreme Court of Maryland Chief Justice Matthew Fader presented the awards.



Seated: Jacqueline Jones; Kayla Williams; Ingrid Hitchens-Hall, accepting on behalf of Kristine Dunkerton; Susan Erlichman. Standing: Hon. Sidney Butcher; Frank Turney; Anthony May; Timothy Chance; Hon. Matthew Fader.

AWARD WINNERS

Susan Erlichman received the **Robert M. Bell Medal for Access to Justice**, MLSC's highest honor, in recognition of her dedication and advocacy on behalf of Maryland's civil legal aid delivery system over a 32-year career with MLSC, including 17 years as the organization's Executive Director.

MLSC presented the **Arthur W. Machen, Jr. Award** to **Frank Turney** of the Law Offices of Frank E. Turney, P.A., who has not only performed significant pro bono bankruptcy work but has provided training and mentorship to other attorneys and helped Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service launch a new alternative debt relief program.

Kristine Dunkerton was named the recipient of the **Benjamin L. Cardin Distinguished Service Award** following a 25-year career with Community Law Center, including 17 years as Executive Director, during which she spearheaded litigation and developed programs and legislation to improve neighborhoods and benefit nonprofit clients.

MLSC presented three **Rising Star Awards in 2022**.

Timothy Chance is the Tangled Title attorney at Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, where his work and leadership bolsters the intergenerational transfer of wealth in communities of color. **Anthony May**, an attorney with the law firm of Brown, Goldstein & Levy, is known for his commitment to representing marginalized people, including school children and school staff with disabilities. **Kayla Williams**, supervising attorney with Community Legal Services of Prince George's County has built and managed that county's Tenant Representation Program, increasing legal access for many in her community while garnering the respect of the bench and bar.

The **William L. Marbury Outstanding Advocate Award** was presented to **Jacqueline Jones**, longtime paralegal at Senior Legal Services in Baltimore. In the past twelve years, Ms. Jones has touched the lives of clients, community partners, and attorneys alike, providing stability within her organization across multiple directors.



Attendees at the 2022 Annual Awards reception applaud the late Benjamin Civiletti and his wife Gaile Civiletti, seated between longtime family friends Herbert Belgrad (standing) and Joanne Belgrad (seated). Mr. Belgrad is a former MLSC board chair.

Benjamin Civiletti Honored

At the Annual Awards Reception, Professor Michael Millemann, MLSC's original board secretary, commemorated the life of Benjamin Civiletti, the 73rd US Attorney General and MLSC's first board chair, who died in October 2022.

MLSC IS PLEASED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE 2022 AWARDS RECEPTION SPONSORS

ADVOCATE

Iliff, Meredith, Wildberger & Brennan, P.C.
Kramon & Graham, P.A.
Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP

PARTNER

Ballard Spahr LLP
Bellamy Genn Group, LLC
Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP
DLA Piper LLP
Fund for Change
Gallagher Evelius & Jones LLP
Gross, Mendelsohn & Associates
Law Offices of Sally B. Gold, LLC
Maryland State Bar Association
Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company
Santoni, Vocci, & Ortega, LLC
Marjorie Wax and Brian Hochheimer
Zuckerman Spaeder LLP

SUPPORTER

Hon. Robert M. Bell
Gordon Feinblatt LLC
Gorges and Company
Hyatt & Weber, PA
Harriet Robinson
Hon. Mark Scurti
Shapiro Sher Guinot & Sandler
Summit Business Technologies, LLC
Hon. Pamela J. White
Zide Siegel Tabor Spigel LLC

MEDIA SPONSOR

MARYLAND
THE DAILY RECORD

THE IOLTA HONOR ROLL

This joint initiative of the Maryland State Bar Association and MLSC consists of financial institutions that pay premium rates on IOLTA accounts, supporting critically needed legal aid for low-income Marylanders. We salute these institutions and encourage our supporters to patronize Honor Roll members.



MLSC REVENUE

MLSC revenue for grants is primarily generated from the MLSC Fund, which is composed of three special funding sources:

A surcharge on certain Circuit and District Court filing fees

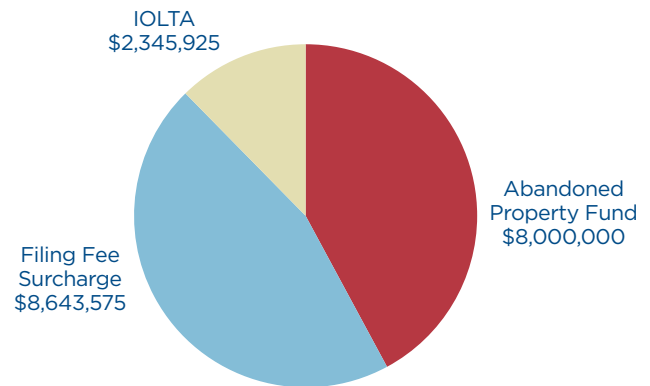
Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) held by Maryland-licensed lawyers

\$8,000,000 from the Abandoned Property Fund

The MLSC Fund Appropriation is set in the State's budget each year based on projected revenues. The appropriation sets an upper limit on the amount that can be spent but does not guarantee the Fund will receive the full amount. MLSC receives the amount actually collected in the Fund, up to the appropriation limit.

MLSC FUND REVENUE

The FY22 MLSC Fund appropriation was set at \$22 million, but total revenues in the Fund reached just under \$19 million.



SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Statement of Net Position

June 30, 2022

Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,741,276
Investments	12,596,207
Receivable, IOLTA Receipts	443,983
Due from State of Maryland	3,092,392
Grants Receivable	334,538
Other Receivables	71,343
Prepaid Expenses	34,781
Capital Assets - Net of Accumulated Depreciation	45,346
Right-of-Use Assets - Net of Accumulated Ammortization	134,148
Other Assets	151,115
	3,200
Total Assets	18,648,329

Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	387,399
Deferred Revenue	2,982,449
Due to State of Maryland	447,070
Deferred Compensation Obligation	151,115
Deferred Tenant Improvements	3,866
Lease Liabilities	135,417
Total Liabilities	4,107,316

Net Position

Net Investment in Capital Assets	45,346
Net Investment in Capital Assets	134,148
Unrestricted	12,792,696
Temporarily Restricted	1,568,823

Total Net Position **\$14,541,013**

Statement of Activities

For the Year Ended June 30, 2022

Program Expenses - Legal Assistance **\$23,384,322**

General Revenues

State of Maryland Appropriations - Legal Assistance	18,989,996
Judicare Program	1,574,551
State of Maryland Housing Security Grant	194,148
Government Grants	2,165,057
Forgiveness of Debt	66,850
Contributions	16,524
Investment Income, Net	(1,166,628)

Total General Revenues **21,840,498**

Decrease in Net Position (1,543,824)

Net Position at Beginning of Year 16,084,837

Net Position at End of Year **\$14,541,013**

Note

The report is a summary of the financial statements incorporated in the annual audit report issued by Gross, Mendelsohn, & Associates, P.A. for the year ended June 30, 2022. The complete financial statements and notes are available upon request from MLSC.

MLSC BOARD

Hon. Sidney A. Butcher, Chair

Anne Arundel County
District Court of Maryland, Anne Arundel County

Aileen M. Eskildsen, CPA, Treasurer

Baltimore County
Ellin & Tucker

Violet M. Apple

Baltimore County
Girl Scouts of Central Maryland

Allison Banks

Baltimore City
NeoSystems, LLC

Catherine A. Bledsoe, Esq.

Howard County
Office of the Attorney General

Hon. C. Philip Nichols Jr.

Prince George's County
Circuit Court for Prince George's County
(Retired)

Hon. Martha F. Rasin

Kent County
District Court of Maryland (Retired)

Phyllis G. Scalettar, Ph.D.

Montgomery County
Corporate Advisor

Debra A. Thomas, Esq.

Baltimore City
Law Offices of Debra A. Thomas, P.C.

Deb Seltzer, Secretary (ex officio)

Maryland Legal Services Corporation

MLSC STAFF



Pictured left to right: Dave Pantzer, Athana Kontinos, Karen Wabeke, Deb Seltzer, Kaa Andam, Shawdae Harrison

Deb Seltzer

Executive Director

Kaa Andam

IOLTA Compliance Manager

Shawdae Harrison

Operations Coordinator

Athana Kontinos

Grants Compliance Manager

Susan S. Lentz

Finance Manager

Dave Pantzer, Esq.

Deputy Director

Karen Wabeke, Esq.

Program Manager, Access to Counsel in Evictions

Howard County
MARYLAND VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS SERVICE
Judicare Grant

The client was the defendant in a custody case. Her ex-husband, who was not her child's biological father, filed for custody, despite having put her through significant psychological and physical abuse, even in front of the minor child. The case involved significant discovery and novel legal issues. According to the volunteer lawyer, this was not a case the client could handle without legal counsel. The volunteer lawyer spent over 70 hours on the case and was able to get it dismissed on the day of the trial.

FUNDING LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVING THE ENDS OF JUSTICE



ABOUT **MLSC**

The Maryland Legal Services Corporation, established in 1982 by the Maryland General Assembly, is a nonprofit organization governed by a nine-member Board of Directors appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. MLSC distributes funds from the Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program and other sources to nonprofit organizations for the provision of civil legal services to low-income Marylanders. MLSC currently provides funding to 41 nonprofit grantees throughout Maryland to ensure that eligible clients in all areas of the state have access to legal assistance.

ABOUT **IOLTA**

Attorneys routinely receive client funds to be held in trust for future use. In the case of amounts that are small or to be held for a short time, attorneys must place these funds into Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA). The generated interest is used by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation for grants to programs that provide civil legal services to low-income Marylanders.