

2019



ANNUAL REPORT

2019 IMPACT REPORT



Milo Mumgaard

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Everyone needs something to motivate and stir their imagination. Here at Legal Aid of Nebraska, we have ours- the lives and challenges of our clients from low-income backgrounds. All of them Nebraskans deserving of more fairness, more justice in their lives.

At Legal Aid, we are inspired to reach these Nebraskans with our one-of-a-kind legal help. We know that if we can help the mother who is struggling get free of her abusive partner, her family has hope. We know that if we assist the father who has a disability to get his earned benefits, he can support his family. We know that if we battle for the family losing their home, they can keep their lives together.

2019 was an amazing year. Not only did Legal Aid help so many, but we confronted an historic natural disaster, launched innovative technology to better reach and serve our client communities, and reopened our Lincoln office as the modern Legal Aid of tomorrow.

Legal Aid: we make **equal justice** happen.
Thank you for your continued support.



Milo Mumgaard
Executive Director

We
make
equal
justice
happen

WHERE, HOW AND WHO



69% of people served were female



606 cases involved U.S. veterans



2,477 people served with disabilities



25% of people served were 60 years old or over



1,515 cases involved a victim of abuse



28% of all households served were in deep poverty



13,174 total of children helped on all closed cases



12,802 cases were handled and closed

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2019, the work of Legal Aid of Nebraska helped **15,798 unique individuals**

18,144
requests for assistance

Scottsbluff, Nebraska

A BATTLE FOR HER CHILDREN

Jennifer* lived in an abusive relationship for almost three years before her husband was sent to prison for beating her so badly she was sent to the hospital. The brutal assault happened in 2017. Her husband used pieces of wood and broken bottles to beat Jennifer over the head, resulting in six staples to close a three-inch laceration. Jennifer has cerebral palsy and her husband's attack required her to start using a walker to get around.

Her husband went to prison for the assault, and was released after 18 months. At first, Jennifer thought things would be different. They were living separately, and maybe they could make things work.

"He was being good but that only lasted for about three months," she said. **"Then he started acting odd again."**

Her husband became increasingly aggressive. Suddenly, he told Jennifer he wanted a divorce and 50/50 custody of their two children, ages 7 and 4. Jennifer knew she couldn't let him have partial custody of their children. That's when she turned to Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Legal Aid's REACH Initiative (Raising Effective Advocacy for Crime Victim's Health and Safety) provides free legal assistance to victims and survivors of domestic violence in rural Nebraska. Under the REACH Initiative, Legal Aid represented Jennifer in her divorce and helped her get full custody of her children.

"We had to put an end to the relentless harassment she was being exposed to," said Legal Aid attorney Danny Reynaga.

Throughout the process, Jennifer was extremely grateful to have someone in her corner.

"If my husband was trying to bully me, Danny told him to talk to him and not me."

Ultimately, a custody order was entered that addressed Jennifer's safety and the safety of her children.

"That would not have happened without Legal Aid," she said.

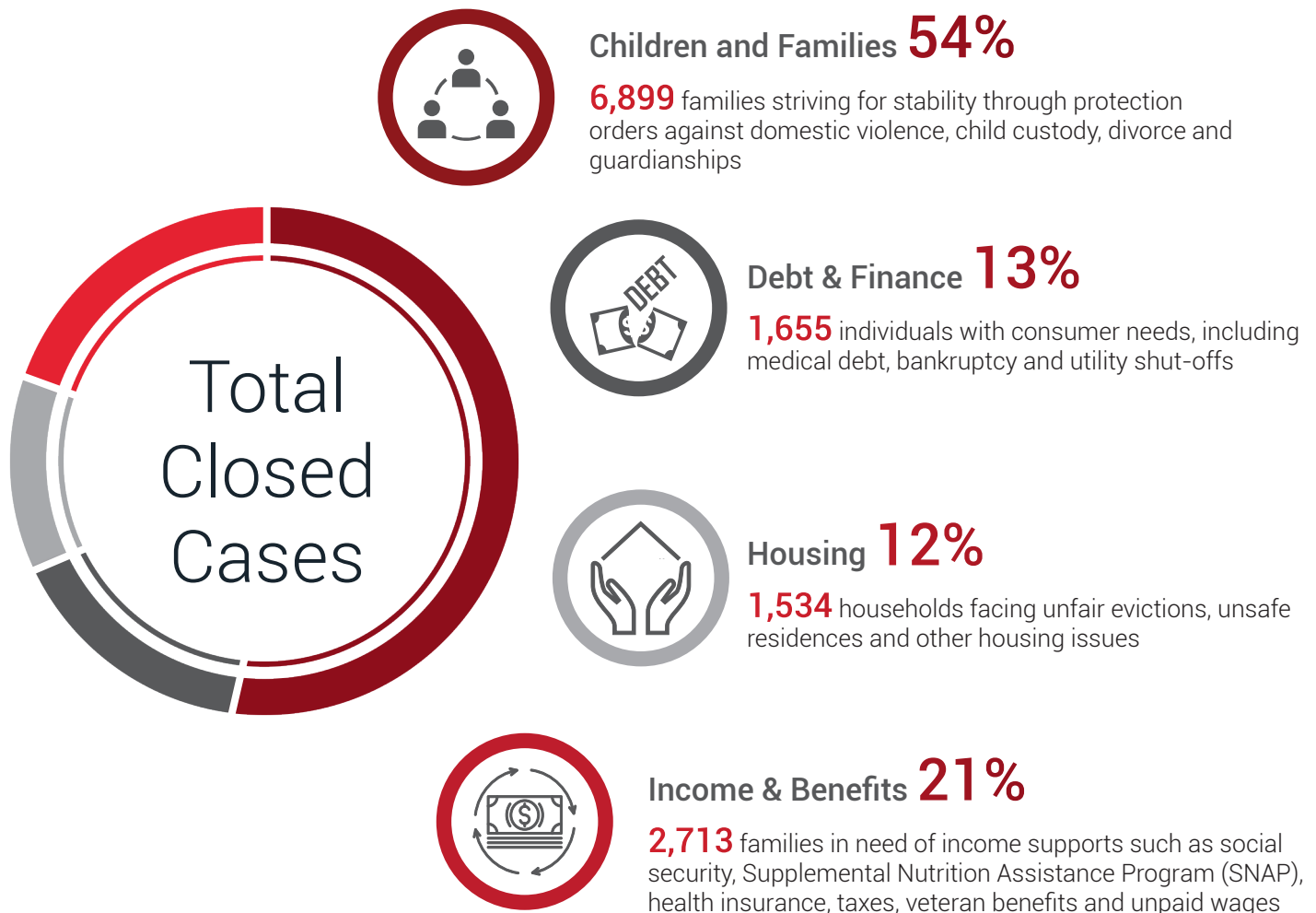
"He was being good but that only lasted for about three months," she said. "Then he started acting odd again."



*Name has been changed for client's protection.

Total Closed Cases 2019

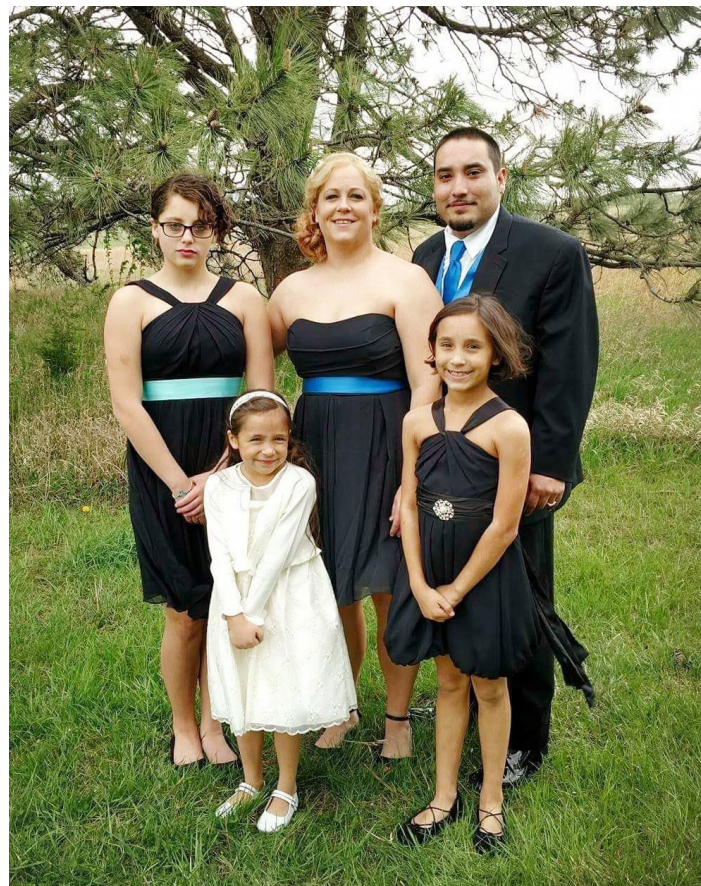
MAKING EQUAL JUSTICE HAPPEN



Total Economic Impact
\$18,584,448

\$3,072,821 Total Increased Assets **\$4,304,359** Total Increased Income **\$11,203,932** Total Decreased Debt

“I couldn't forget his face. He changed my life.”



A chance encounter **17 YEARS LATER**

After leaving court in mid-February 2019, Lincoln Legal Aid attorney Scott Sidwell was checking the progress at Legal Aid's new office in the Terminal Building. The new space was under construction following a 2018 Presidents' Day fire that destroyed Legal Aid's office. As Sidwell started to leave, he was stopped by a man from the company who was helping set up the new office.

"What's your name?" the man asked.

"Scott Sidwell."

"You were my lawyer."

Nearly 17 years after Sidwell represented Edward Diaz as a juvenile in court, chance brought them back together.

"I couldn't forget his face," Diaz said. **"He changed my life."**

When Diaz was 17, he was in a fight and **"made some stupid mistakes."** Sidwell, who had only been with Legal Aid for about a year at that point, was able to get Diaz's charges significantly reduced. Diaz says if that hadn't happened, he doesn't know where he'd be today.

"He gave a 17-year-old kid hope," Diaz said of Sidwell. **"He listened to me when no one else would."**

Diaz worked hard to turn his life around as an adult and is now employed as a modular furniture installer for Changing Spaces. He lives in Lincoln with his wife and three children.

Sidwell gives all the credit to Diaz for changing his own life.

"Edward discovered himself, grew up, and became a productive citizen to the benefit of himself, his family, and all the rest of us," Sidwell said.

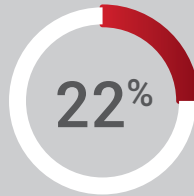
Year ended December 31, 2019

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2019 Revenue Percentages \$8,264,264



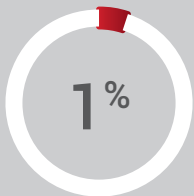
Federal



Legal Services Corp.



State



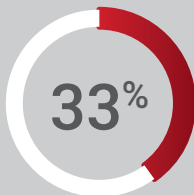
Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts



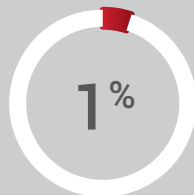
United Way



County



Foundations, Corp, Private

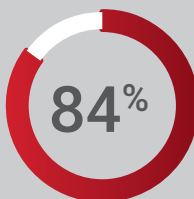


Contributed Services



Interest & Misc

2019 Expense Percentages \$7,960,596



Program Services



Administrative



Development



We make
equal justice
happen.



LegalaidOfNebraska.org



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