



Legal Aid of Nebraska Annual Report 2009



The People of
Legal Aid ...

Serving Every
Corner of
Our State

What's Inside

Board of Directors	2
Surviving the Storm	3
Providing Legal Services in a Tough Economy	4
Special Client Services	9
Firm Members	9-10
2008-2010 Bar Campaign Committees	10
2009 Bar Campaign Donors	11
2009 Federal, State and County Grants	11
2009 United Way	11
2009 Revenue and Cases Closed Charts	12
2009 Foundation Donors	12
2009 Donors	12
PAI Attorneys	
Work Hard to Help Legal Aid	13
2009 PAI Attorneys	13
Nebraska IOLTA	
Participating Financial Institutions	14
2009 Audited Operating Statement	15
Legal Aid of Nebraska	
Office Locations	16

Legal Aid of Nebraska gratefully acknowledges the following major sources of operating funds:

Legal Services Corporation
Nebraska Commission on Public Advocacy
Nebraska Lawyers Trust Account Foundation
Nebraska Law Firms & Attorneys

Board of Directors

Officers

President, Matthew Dunning, J.D., Nebraska Dept. of Health & Human Services
Vice-President, Michael Schleich, J.D., Fraser Stryker, Omaha
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Term: 2009-2011

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Julianna Jenkins, J.D., Sennet, Duncan & Jenkins, Broken Bow

Term: 2007-2009

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Susie K. Chief Bear, Scottsbluff
Michael Willet, J.D., Willet & Carothers, Beatrice
William A. Tringe, J.D., Holdrege
Lashawn Young, J.D., Omaha

Term: 2008-2010

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William T. Foley, J.D., Erickson & Sederstrom, P.C., Omaha
Kathryn Olson, J.D., Lincoln
Judge Michael McGill, General Counsel Emeritus, Boys Town
Courtney Klein-Faust, J.D., Norfolk



Members of the Legal Aid of Nebraska Board of Directors. Seated, from left: Matthew G. Dunning, Board President; Janice Brown; Katherine Voorhees; Judge Michael McGill; Grace Pantoja. Standing, from left: Michael Schleich; Kathryn Olson; Larry Baumann; Susie Chief Bear; Ron Oleson; Mike Willet; Mike Burns. Not Shown: Courtney Klein-Faust; William Foley; LaShawn Young; Kile Johnson; Julianna Jenkins; William Tringe.



Dave Pantos – Executive Director

Surviving the Storm

What happens when one of the most essential pillars of community responses to poverty fails during a major economic downturn? In the case of civil legal aid for the poor in Nebraska, we did not have to answer that question.

While legal aid programs across the country downsized because of crippling cuts to their revenues, Legal Aid of Nebraska kept its staff and ended 2009 without being forced to tap into our cash reserves.

Instead, Legal Aid actually expanded its services to the poor:

- We secured new funding to enhance and promote our state-wide ElderAccessLine®.
- We began a program offering legal representation and training for domestic violence victims and advocates in the Winnebago, Omaha, and Santee Sioux tribes.
- We began a new medical-legal partnership serving cancer patients at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

All told, we provided legal representation, advice, and information to nearly 10 percent more people in 2009 than 2008.

It's all about surviving the storm so that others who count on you stay dry.

But we did not end the year without challenges. National studies show that for every person who accesses legal aid, one gets turned away. That is certainly the case in Nebraska. With more than one out of six Nebraskans eligible for our services, the need is great and grows every day.

As always, fundraising for our mission is an ongoing challenge. We lost a federal grant for domestic violence work due to flat-lined funding, and the state Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program has been decimated by reduced economic activity and low interest rates.

Legal Aid survived a major threat in the Nebraska State Legislature in the fall. In addressing the budget deficit, the Unicameral considered a bill that would have, among other things, redirected dollars from the Legal Aid and Services Fund filing fee to the General Fund. Fortunately our friends in and out of the legislature rallied and the filing fee was preserved. And, federal legal services funding substantially increased for the second year in a row.

Notwithstanding the vagaries of fiscal fortunes we are doing well for our clients, as evidenced by a recent assessment by the US Government. During a week-long visit in November, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) – a federally financed, nonprofit corporation charged by Congress to regulate and fund civil legal services for the poor – assessed the performance of Legal Aid of Nebraska's

legal representation, financial management and general operations.

Their report found that "Legal Aid of Nebraska's delivery structure is marked by a commitment to high quality work and a holistic approach. LAN regards itself as a law firm, a culture that is evidenced among staff, management and the board.

The work that the program does is strategically tied to the needs in the community. Overall, the program is highly effective in engaging with the low-income population. Its high quality legal work is conducted in a way so as to achieve the best outcomes for its clients."

LSC also found that Legal Aid of Nebraska outperforms its peer organizations in other states: "The firm's case closings are well above national medians. In 2008, LAN closed 527 cases per 10,000 low-income persons in its service area. This compares to the national median of cases closed per 10,000 poor of 254. In 2008, LAN closed 1,331 extended service cases (15.9 percent of the total cases) and 7,056 limited service cases (84.1 percent of the total cases). This amounts to 80 extended service cases per 10,000 poor and is [51 percent] higher than the national median of 53."

Legal Aid's financial management was also praised: "[The] financial administration staff has established systems and procedures which could well benefit the national legal aid community."

And, despite our loss of federal domestic violence funding, LAN was able to garner significant private financial support along with other leveraged dollars to maintain our current services for victims of DV, including our instant access hotline for victims.

So now we look forward. In late 2010, Legal Aid will embark on a new legal Needs Assessment of the client population. A lot has changed since our landmark 2007 Client Needs Assessment report. In reviewing that report, I was pleased to see how many of the findings, later incorporated in our 2008 strategic planning document, have been fully implemented as part of our practice.

I am looking forward to working with our staff, Board and stakeholders in engaging the civil legal services constituency to shore up what works and see where we go next as a firm. Also in 2010 Legal Aid will initiate a new three-year Bar Campaign to enhance and expand attorney support of Legal Aid's services.

I am sure that all of our current supporters will be as generous as they have been (if not more so) and I eagerly anticipate partnering with our campaign committees to attract new donors to our mission.

That mission – "To promote Justice, Dignity, Hope and Self-sufficiency through quality civil legal aid for those who have no where else to turn" – is what a strong and vital civil legal services provider for the poor is all about. It's the income maintained. It's the shelter preserved. It's the safety ensured. It is the shelter from the storm.

Providing Legal Services in a Tough Economy

Legal Aid continues to extend its reach and effectiveness by partnering with other organizations to meet the needs of low-income Nebraskans, by employing and upgrading the use of technology and by working smarter – whenever possible.

The following articles tell how we provided our critical services during one of the toughest periods of U.S. history – a recession that doesn't seem to end.

Joining with Other Organizations Extends Our Reach

A unique medical-legal partnership begun in 2009 by Legal Aid of Nebraska and The Nebraska Medical Center, is helping cancer patients deal with legal problems.

The partnership began when Executive Direct David Pantos met with Kerry Rodabaugh, M.D., associate professor in obstetrics-gynecology and a gynecological oncologist at The NU Nebraska Medical Center who had moved to Omaha from Buffalo, N.Y.

"I found myself taking care of women with recurrent cervical cancer, and when it's recurrent, it's usually terminal," Dr. Rodabaugh said. "Many of these women were single parents with young children and had no legal arrangements in place for the children."

So Dr. Rodabaugh pioneered a medical-legal partnership in Buffalo to handle the problems cancer patients would encounter, such as custody issues, powers of attorney, foreclosures and benefit advocacy. Convinced of the program's effectiveness, Dr. Rodabaugh brought the idea with her to Omaha, eventually meeting up with Pantos.

"Dr. Rodabaugh told me about her experience with a successful medical-legal partnership for cancer patients and it made perfect sense that a similar program could work well in Omaha," Pantos said. "Legal Aid drafted an agreement, which received input from attorney Howard Hahn, working on behalf of The Nebraska Medical Center. Luckily, Hahn is a former president of the Legal Aid board of directors."

"I think this shows that we're paying attention to the entire patient," Rodabaugh said. "We're not just taking care of cancer with chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. We're addressing everything else that goes into the treatment of the individual."



Dr. Kerry Rodabaugh, M.D., right, believes that her patients should get the legal assistance they need.

As part of the Legal Aid – NU Medical Center agreement, a Legal Aid attorney is always available to consult on issues over the phone and visits the hospital and its clinics once a week. There, attorney Ann Mangiameli meets right at the bedside with cancer patients, working them through their legal issues. So far, both partners consider the process a great success.

“The Nebraska Medical Center is heavily involved and supportive of this program,” Pantos said. “Their social work staff, oncology-hematology department and many other groups are totally invested, and their cancer patients are the ultimate winners.”

Legal Aid Deputy Director Annette Farnan said the partnership has also been positive for Nebraska Medical Center patients from outside of Nebraska, particularly Iowa. “Many cancer patients come to the medical center from western Iowa, so we brought in Iowa Legal Aid as an unfunded partner,” Farnan said. “I would not be surprised if the idea catches on so well there that they develop their own medical – legal partnership at Iowa’s top hospitals.”

Legal Aid and Creighton University Provide Migrant Outreach

Legal Aid of Nebraska and Creighton University in 2009 partnered together to assist migrant workers and families throughout the state.

The initiative, dubbed the Nebraska Migrant Action Coalition, brought together migrant workers and their families at churches, community halls and other public places to learn more about their rights. Legal Aid’s Kay Strong coordinated the outreach in conjunction with Creighton’s Director of Multicultural Affairs, Ricardo Ariza.

Ariza recruited Creighton students to assist the effort. Some met with migrant families in July to perform glaucoma screenings in Scottsbluff and Imperial. Others helped Legal Aid representatives explain the finer points of their rights on issues such as landlord tenant conflicts, family law, health care, abuse, banking and housing. Creighton’s students represented a variety of disciplines, including pre-law and social sciences.

Strong and Legal Aid’s Valentina Saavedra also produced a handbook explaining many of these legal issues in both English and Spanish. “It was very user friendly,” said Annette Farnan, deputy director.

Strong said she expects the initiative to continue in 2010, with Ariza recruiting students and Legal Aid staffers to assist the effort. The Coalition’s focus will be primarily on central and north central Nebraska migrant communities.



Kay Strong



Kelly Boswell

Client: Legal Aid Changed My Life

Assisting with domestic violence cases continued unabated in 2009 after Legal Aid of Nebraska lost its funding under the Justice Department’s VAWA program.

Private donors provided the necessary funds for Legal Aid attorneys to assist families in crisis, including a case handled by Kelly Boswell.

A Legal Aid client who faced a much-needed divorce and child custody situation came to Boswell for help. The woman’s husband was physically abusive, hitting and kicking her at every opportunity.

Boswell said that getting the woman her own safe place to live was a “combination effort” and that “everybody but the husband was helping out.” The husband was not working and threatened to never pay child support. The wife believed he was selling drugs to avoid paying child support and he told her he planned to never work again.

The victim’s in-laws and a friend offered her places to stay – rent free – and saved her money so she could get a place of her own. She also needed transportation and used her tax refund to buy a new car.

Once the woman’s basic necessities were met, she found a job working as a prison guard. Her newfound salary helped her pay for an apartment of her own, and, with state help, she found daycare for her children. Once the wife was no longer economically dependent on the abusive husband, she was able to fully assert herself.

Legal Aid’s Boswell got the woman a divorce along with full custody of her children in a default proceeding, due to the husband’s uncooperative behavior.

At the conclusion of the representation, the grateful client returned a satisfaction survey in which she noted: “Mr. Boswell helped me tremendously. Now I have a great job and a new life and I’m very happy.”

Publicity Delivers Legal Aid Message

Publicity is essential in getting Legal Aid's messages delivered to our many publics, including donors, potential donors, elected officials, lawmakers and others.

In 2009, the Legal Aid story appeared in newspapers and magazines, on statewide NET television, local television and on radio.

For instance, an article that appeared in the Norfolk, Neb., Daily News, told of the key role being played by the Rural Response Hotline: "The hotline is one of the primary services provided by the farm crisis Response Council through Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska. Housed in the farm law office of Legal Aid of Nebraska in Bancroft, it's the longest running farm and ranch hotline in the country."

Quoting Michelle Soll of Legal Aid's Bancroft office, the story also pointed out that the hotline fielded 3,888 calls the previous year; and those calls come literally from everywhere in Nebraska. "There's not one town that would be a new town to me," Soll told the newspaper.

Legal Aid Web Site is Updated

Low-income clients will have an easier path in helping themselves via Legal Aid's revamped Web Site at <http://www.legalaidofnebraska.com>.

The screenshot shows the Legal Aid of Nebraska website. At the top is the logo and name. Below it are navigation links: About Us, FAQ List, Library, Directory, Links. A search bar is prominently displayed. The main content area includes a section titled "In the Trenches" with a quote from a client, a "Need Help with a legal issue?" section with a search bar, and a "Our Mission" section. There are also links for "Office Locations", "Donate Now", and "Upcoming Events".

Rural Response Hotline needed

By MARY PAT HOAG
mhoag@norfolkdailynews.com

KEARNEY — The year was 1984. Times were "really tough" on the rural front, said Michelle Soll. Land values were plunging. Foreclosures were soaring to a record high and debt loads were mounting. Economically distressed and emotionally depressed farmers and ranchers could reach out for assistance through the newly created Nebraska Rural Response Hotline. Today, 25 years later, the hotline remains connected and continues to provide spiritual, emotional, legal and financial counseling to not only producers but others also affected by the rural crisis, said Soll, farm program director of Legal Aid of Nebraska.

The hotline is one of the primary services provided by the Farm Crisis Response Council through Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska. Housed in the farm law office of Nebraska Legal Services in Bancroft, it's the longest-running farm and ranch hotline in the country, she said.

The hotline fielded 3,888 calls in 2008, said Soll, who has been involved with the hotline for over 15 years. No community is exempt, Soll said. "There's not one town that would be a new town to me," she said.

The ag industry is riddled with risks posed by such factors as commodity prices, input costs, weather, diseases and insects. Other risk factors include government regulations, safety issues, and estate and transition planning.

Soll and Marian Beethe presented a workshop titled "Farm Wife to Farm Wife" at the 24th annual Women in Agriculture Conference in Kearney, which was sponsored by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension.

Beethe, a Nebraska Department of Agriculture program administra-



MARY PAT HOAG/DAILY NEWS

MICHELLE SOLL (left) and Marian Beethe (right) show Ceara Eggerling of Pierce, a copy of "The Mediator," a publication of the Nebraska Farm Mediation Program. Eggerling, an ag major at Northeast Community College in Norfolk, attended a workshop conducted by Soll and Beethe at the 2009 Women in Ag Conference in Kearney.

tor, focused on the value of the Farm Finance and Legal Assistance Clinics sponsored by the department's Farm Mediation Service.

Clinic sites include Norfolk, Ainsworth and Valentine. Clinics are staffed by experienced farm and ranch financial counselors; attorneys experienced in farm and ranch issues, including debtor/creditor and Farm Service Agency work; and farm and ranch mediators with the Nebraska Farm Mediation Service.

The mediation clinics, Beethe said, offer peace of mind from the opportunity afforded to both parties to speak openly in confidence; the leveling of the "playing field;" development of insights into laws and regulations; and exploration of various solutions.

Mediation, Beethe said, is the best alternative in resolving ag credit disputes. "We're trying to be really proactive . . . to solve a problem before it happens," she said.

The annual success rate of these clinics is 75 percent, she said.

Soll said staff associated with the rural response hotline and mediation clinics are "firm believers of confidentiality" and "very nonjudgmental about anything that goes on."

In addition, Beethe said staff are "very knowledgeable about the ag industry."

Want to learn more?
Contact Michelle Soll with the Nebraska Rural Response Hotline at (800) 464-0258. Contact Marian Beethe at 471-6890, (800) 446-4071 or marian.beethe@nebraska.gov.

Rural resources

■ **Nebraska Farm Hotline:** (800) 464-0258

Can be first stop for information on resources and services available to farm and ranch families and rural residents. Financial, legal and counseling services and referrals are available.

■ **Farm Finance and Legal Assistance Clinics:** (800) 464-0258

Free, monthly clinics offered at several locations, including Norfolk, and every other month in Ainsworth and Valentine.

■ **Legal Aid of Nebraska:** (877) 250-2016

Provides free legal services (limited to civil matters) to income-eligible individuals unable to afford legal representation.

■ **Nebraska Farm Mediation Service:** (800) 446-4071

Offers financial preparation and mediation to assist borrowers and their lenders in resolving ag debt issues. Also offers mediation to help producers who have received an adverse situation from a USDA agency.

■ **Nebraska Beginning Farmer Service:** (800) 753-6396

The state Department of Agriculture administers the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Act. The program encourages owners of ag assets (including land, machinery and livestock facilities) to rent to an eligible beginning farmer to help get him or her started.

■ **Counseling Outreach Mental Health Therapy:** (800) 464-0258

Offers no-cost vouchers for professional counseling for persons affected by the rural crisis.

■ **Emergency food pantry assistance:** (800) 464-0258

Statewide referrals to local emergency food pantries.

■ **Community action agencies, including Goldenrod Hills Community Services in Wisner:** 529-3513

■ **Prescription assistance:** www.themedicineprogram.com

■ **Nebraska Health Insurance Information Counseling & Assistance Program:** (800) 234-7119

Provides information and counseling to older Nebraskans regarding Medicare, Medicaid and health insurance.

All changes are aimed at increasing ease of use and functionality.

Clients now see a cleaner, easier-to-navigate home page, easy access to staff directories, cleaner paths to important documents and phone numbers.

The search engine has been redesigned to assist users with legal issues. Visitors to the site can enter a brief description of their legal issues or questions and are then redirected to an accurate list of search results.

The Web Site also is used for communications and includes Legal Aid's Annual Reports and Briefly newsletters. Legal Aid also has joined Facebook, a social networking site that allows people to interact online.

Homeless Projects Needed More than Ever

Legal Aid's Homeless projects proved to be lifesavers in Lincoln and Omaha during the rough economic times of 2009.

Attorneys Lori Wilson and Pat Ford saw to it that small and large legal problems did not become "rock bottom" for hundreds of Nebraskans seriously down on their luck.

Wilson, who recently moved to the Grand Island office, encountered a man at the Peoples' City Mission, Lincoln's only homeless shelter. He qualified for Social Security Disability but those cases often take up to two years, Wilson noted. "In the meantime, these people

are unable to work, have no income, and they sleep on the streets or at the mission."

After applying for help from Lancaster County's General Assistance program, the man was denied. That's when Wilson stepped in to handle an appeal and was able to provide proper documentation, including information about his prior employment. The client had left the job as he was no longer able to perform his duties because of his disability.

In November, Wilson's client was approved for General Assistance. He now receives a stipend from that program, plus food stamps, and his approval qualified him for low-income housing.



Lori Wilson

Representing Nebraskans Sometimes Involves the World

Providing legal representation for low-income Nebraskans sometimes involves issues with roots far outside of the state's borders.

The Grand Island office discovered that in a 2009 matter involv-

ing Sudanese refugees who fled to central Nebraska to escape war and poverty in their North African native land.

Grand Island's strong agricultural community and meatpacking industry offered the refugees a chance at jobs, growth and family livelihood. While most Grand Islanders accepted their new neighbors, the refugees – some from opposite sides among warring tribes in the homeland – soon recognized they needed some sort of "organization" to assist them in their dealings with government and business.

Legal Aid of Nebraska stepped in and assisted the new Nebraskans in forming a non-profit corporation and we are currently helping them obtain their federal 501(c)(3) status.

The new legal status facilitated the settlement of old tribal differences and helped them

receive financial aid and social coaching to assist in the transition to their new home. The newly organized approach became a key to legitimizing the population's status in Grand Island, showing a desire to participate in American social structures.



see page 8

Legal Aid Staffers Provide Education

Education is a big part of the work of Legal Aid attorneys and staff members – besides their daily work of assisting people deal with legal issues.

Attorney Pat Ford of the Omaha office (photo at right) recently spoke to a group of young people at Goodwill Industries about job skills. His presentation was funded by the Department of Labor.

Throughout Nebraska, Legal Aid staff members frequently speak at seminars, meetings and focus groups on topics ranging from Farm-Ranch law to Elder law to Immigration issues and many other topics.

"Information is so important for everyone, particularly to low-income Nebraskans," said Executive Director Dave Pantos. "By

helping people learn, we help ourselves become more effective in delivering our services."



from page 7

Under the 501(c)(3) umbrella, the refugees worked with local authorities including police to improve understanding of cultural differences.

In creating the non-profit organization, Legal Aid helped the Sudanese Refugee community take a giant step in the direction of self-sufficiency.

Awards Recognize Legal Aid's 2009 Performance

A pair of recent awards given by significant public service organizations have recognized Legal Aid of Nebraska's special efforts during 2009.

More than 350 people gathered at the Scott Conference Center for United Way of the Midlands' annual meeting and awards function. Among them were businesses and other supporters who helped generate \$21.1 million for the United Way.

Omaha Philanthropist Dick Holland was honored along with Legal Aid's Executive Director Dave Pantos. Holland received United Way's Citizen of the Year Award while Pantos accepted the Chair's Partnership Award for its work on behalf of refugees, asylees and immigrants on a path to citizenship.

"Thank you very much for this honor," said Pantos. "I must speak on behalf of Legal Aid – its board and staff – by appreciating how much United Way brings people together and organizations together in the community to find real solutions for those who need it the most."

"Legal Aid is to bring justice, hope and dignity through free, civil legal services for those who have no where else to turn, and certainly to these new Americans who are joining us every day from war-torn nations as refugees or as asylees," Pantos added.

"They are certainly the ones who have nowhere else to turn and the fact that the United Way supports Legal Aid, as well as our other partners, at the International Center who are providing these essential services, is just remarkable and I really must personally praise their commitment to these new Americans."

In a second ceremony, The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) presented Legal Aid with its "Non-profit of the Year" Award.

The DVCC noted how Legal Aid continued to provide legal help to domestic violence victims in 2009 – despite losing a substantial portion of its government funding.

Pantos praised private donors who "came through" for Legal Aid so that all domestic violence programs could continue.

89 Percent of Revenue Spent on Services

Donors and other supporters of the mission of Legal Aid of Nebraska can rest assured their dollars and efforts are well placed.



According to the 2009 Operating Statement (page 15), 89 cents out of every dollar that Legal Aid received went for program services – directly helping low-income Nebraskans deal with their legal issues.

"In 2009 we spent just over \$600,000 for administration and fundraising," said Executive Director Dave Pantos. "That means more than \$4.86 million went for program services."

"There are very few service organizations anywhere with that high of a service to cost ratio," Pantos added.

The Daily Record, April 1, 2010

Page 3

Legal/Bar Report

United Way of the Midlands Thanks Its Benefactors at Annual Meeting

By James Barnes
The Daily Record

More than 350 people convened at the Scott Conference Center during the United Way of the Midlands' annual meeting and awards luncheon Monday. Despite a tough economy, approximately 80,000 individual donors, 6,000 volunteers, and a thousand companies helped to generate more than \$21.1 million for the United Way of the Midlands in 2009.

"We feel so fortunate to have seen the phrase 'Live United' come to life and all the people who give, advocate and volun-



THE DAILY RECORD

Thursday, April 1, 2010

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Special Client Services

Because of an ever-growing population of Nebraskans who qualify for our services, Legal Aid makes continuous efforts to stretch our effectiveness. The following initiatives and special services ensured that in 2009 we served more deserving people.

- Legal Aid's **Farm/Ranch and Rural Response Hotline** helps rural residents to get accurate information on financial matters, law, risk management and counseling or referrals to other community groups. This is managed by the Bancroft office in partnership with Inter-church Ministries of Nebraska.
- Information on tax rights and responsibilities is delivered throughout the state to English as a Second Language and low-income populations via our **Low-Income Tax Clinics**. Participants also get advice and representation in controversies involving the IRS.
- Most of our legal services begin with the statewide toll-free **AccessLine®** where attorneys and paralegals offer advice, brief service, referrals and extended representation.
- As part of our **Elder Law Program®** attorneys travel throughout northeast Nebraska to provide legal education, advice, brief services and direct representation and help with wills, durable powers of attorney and health care directives.
- For those age 60 and over, the **ElderAccessLine®** is staffed by an experienced paralegal who confers with an attorney. There is no income eligibility restriction.
- Civil legal services are available to Migrant Workers via the **Migrant Worker Program**.
- Our **Bilingual Program** helps Nebraskans who are not proficient in English by providing educational materials in their native languages, plus translation and interpretation services.
- Legal help is delivered to the homeless and their families by attorneys who regularly visit shelters under the **Homeless Assistance Project**.

Firm Members

NATIVE AMERICAN PROJECT

EMANUEL-MOORE, Elise – Native American Project Coordinator
D'SOUZA, Mike – Law Clerk
SEAGRASS, Jonathan – Attorney
THIN ELK, Theresa – DV Attorney

BANCROFT (Farm Ranch Project)

SOLL, Michelle – Project Manager
MARR, Lori – Administrative Assistant

GRAND ISLAND

STRONG, Kay – Managing Attorney
GAMBOA, Rodrigo – Coordinator of Minority Programs
SCHOTT, Crystal – Paralegal
SUKRAW-LUTZ, Ann – Paralegal

LINCOLN

CARRAHER, Patrick – Managing Attorney
BERNT, Heather – Paralegal
BESTUL, Mark – Attorney
BORGERDING-KULWICKI, Jennifer – Attorney
CEBALLOS, Kristin – Paralegal
IMMENSCHUH, Lakeshia – Receptionist
LEWIT, Brittani – Attorney
MILLIGAN, John – Attorney
PENG, Shirley – Attorney
RODRIGUEZ, Hazell – Attorney
SIDWELL, Scott – Attorney
STICE, Cheryl – Administrative Assistant
WILSON, Lori – Attorney
WROBLEWSKI, Lea – Attorney
YOUNG, Adam – Law Clerk

NORFOLK

LEE, Lori – Managing Attorney
McMAHON, Amanda – Attorney
WESCHE, Kathy – Paralegal

NORTH PLATTE

EASTMAN, Jeffrey – Managing Attorney
CARPENTER, Victoria – Paralegal
FARRITOR, Shawn – Attorney

Firm Members

OMAHA

HEANEY, Muirne – Managing Attorney
 BOSWELL, Kelly – Attorney
 D'AMATO, Elaine – Attorney
 FORD, Pat – Attorney
 HENDERSON, Jennifer – Paralegal
 LESLIE, Megan – Paralegal
 MANGIAMELI, Ann – Attorney
 McSHANE, Anne – Attorney
 MERTZ, Scott – Attorney
 MU, Xiao – Law Clerk
 NADING, Laurie – Paralegal
 REED, Kalisha – Paralegal
 RIVERIA, Tim – Attorney
 SAAVEDRA, Valentina – Paralegal
 SHANNON, Liliana – Attorney

OMAHA (AccessLine®/ElderAccessLine®)

HEER-DALE, Laurel – AL Managing Attorney
 BEZRUTCYK, Ana – Intake Paralegal
 BRADLEY, Christina – Intake Paralegal
 DUNOVAN, Kimberly – AL Attorney
 MARCOTTE, Anne – Intake Attorney
 MATHESON, Jessica – Intake Paralegal
 MCGILL, Jennifer – Intake Paralegal
 SCHAEFER, Margaret – Elder AL Attorney
 STOLARSKYJ, Kathleen – Intake Paralegal

OMAHA (Administration)

PANTOS, Dave – Executive Director
 BROOKS, Ed – Accounting Manager
 FARNAN, Annette – Deputy Director
 FEELHAVER, Rod – CFO
 GAUGHAN, Jennifer – Dir. of Litigation & Adv.
 KAMMERER, Mike – Tech. Coordinator
 MASON, Venita – Receptionist
 PERRY, Selina – HUD Coordinator/Grants Mgr.
 STOLARSKYJ, Christine – PAI Coordinator
 WILLIAMS, Emma – Administrative Assistant

SCOTTSDLUFF

SKELCHER, Sheldon – Managing Attorney
 MILLER, Casey – Attorney
 PALOMO, Amanda – Paralegal
 PETTIS, Alena – Paralegal

2008-2010

Bar Campaign Committees

OMAHA COMMITTEE

John Holdenried, Co-Chair, *Baird Holm*
 Tom Dahlk, Co-Chair, *Blackwell Sanders*
 Steve Achelpohl
 Woody Bradford, *Bradford Coenen*
 John Brownrigg, *Erickson Sederstrom*
 Dan Chesire, *Lamson Dugan*
 Bruce Clawson, *Kiewit*
 Bill Dittrick, *Baird Holm*
 Matthew Dunning, J.D.
 David Ernst, *Pansing Hogan*
 William T. Foley, *Erickson Sederstrom*
 Gerald Friedrichsen, *Fitzgerald Schorr*
 Tom Grennan, *Gross Welch*
 David Houghton, *Lieben Whitted*
 The late Gordon Hauptman, *Hauptman O'Brien*
 Muirne Heaney, *Legal Aid of Nebraska*
 John Herdzina, *Abrahams Kaslow*
 Tom Jenkins, *Blue Cross/Blue Shield*
 Paul Jessen, *Koley Jessen*
 Mike Kinney, *Cassem Tierney*
 Mike Leahy, *Medico Insurance*
 Amy Longo, *Ellick Jones*
 Judge Michael McGill, *Boys Town*
 Mike Nelsen, *Hillman Forman*
 Karla Rupiper, *Koley Jessen*
 Michael Schleich, *Fraser Stryker*
 Paul Shotkoski, *Fraser Stryker*
 Ed Warin, *McGrath North*
 John Wilke
 Patty Zieg, *Stinson Morrison*

LINCOLN COMMITTEE

Kile Johnson, Co-Chair, *Johnson Flodman*
 Steve Nelsen, Co-Chair, *Cline Williams*
 Hal Anderson, *ACW Law*
 Joe Badami, *Woods Aitken*
 Con Keating, *Keating O'Gara*
 Christie Schroff, *Schwartzhopf Schroff & Holmquist*
 Herb Friedman, *Friedman Law*
 Jen Gaughan, *Legal Aid of Nebraska*
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2009 Federal, State and County Grants

Legal Services Corp.....\$1,623,974

Commission on Public Advocacy

Legal Aid & Services Fund.....\$1,427,235

Civil Legal Aid & Service Fund.....\$150,000

Department of Justice

Violence Against Women Grant.....\$300,000

Violence Against Women

Native American Grant.....\$45,232

Lancaster County

Juvenile Contracts.....\$282,147

Joint Budget Commission.....\$30,000

Interest on Lawyers

Trust Accounts (IOLTA).....\$225,000

Nebraska Department

of Agriculture.....\$143,068

West Tennessee Legal Services.....\$60,162

Nebraska Health & Human Services.....\$56,308

Northeast Nebraska

Area Agency on Aging.....\$30,128

Administration on Aging –

Model Approaches.....\$28,748

IRS - Low Income Tax Center.....\$22,605

NE Association

Area Agencies on Aging.....\$21,800

US Department of Agriculture

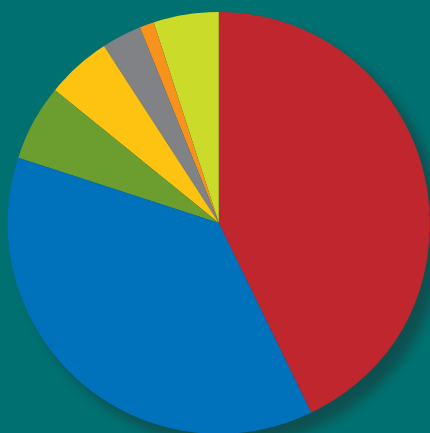
Risk Management Education.....\$21,464

2009 United Way

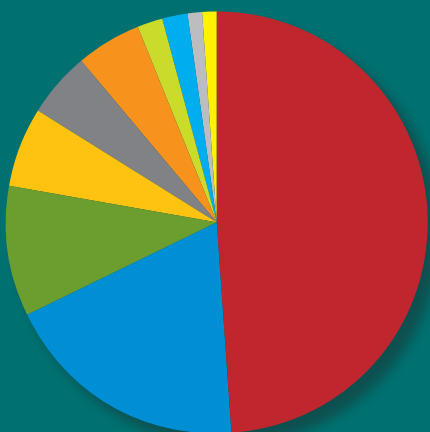
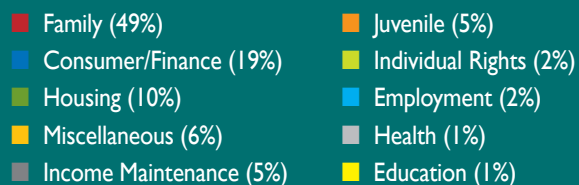
United Way Lancaster County.....\$31,749

United Way Midlands.....\$40,200

2009 Revenue



2009 Cases Closed



2009 Foundation Donors

We greatly appreciate our donors who make sure that we live up to our mission of “promoting justice, hope, dignity and self-sufficiency through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn.”

The Sherwood Foundation.....\$75,000	Rupert Dunklau Foundation, Inc.....\$10,000
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska.....\$62,220	Omaha Community Foundation.....\$7,500
Woods Charitable Foundation.....\$25,000	Wells Fargo Foundation.....\$3,000
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University of Nebraska Medical Center.....\$16,643	Charles Schwab Foundation.....\$2,500
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PAI Attorneys Work Hard to Help Legal Aid

Steven Twohig of Fremont is one of many private attorneys who devote part of their practice to assisting Nebraska's low-income population at reduced rates through Legal Aid of Nebraska's Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) program.

Since 2003, Twohig – a 2001 graduate of the University of Nebraska's College of Law – has taken on PAI work in addition to his usual caseload at Twohig Law Office. Since then, he's handled more than 70 cases for Legal Aid. Twohig's first PAI cases came at a critical time in his career, too, as he formed his own practice that same year after working for one-and-a-half years at another firm.

Twohig's PAI caseload differs little from his day-to-day work. "Basically, I handle all kinds of cases," Twohig says. "But I don't represent rapists, pedophiles or domestic abusers."

Of all his cases during his seven-year tenure as a PAI attorney, Twohig's first case sticks out the most. It was then that he learned of Legal Aid's commitment to those most vulnerable...and of the firm's commitment to providing thorough preparatory work in pre-screening cases. This process allows the PAI attorney to have as much information as necessary to move forward with each case, making the outcomes much more predictable.

"These people who come to Legal Aid have taken the first step in reversing their cycle of abuse. And in the case of abuse, it's a double



PAI Attorney Steven Twohig of Fremont, second from left, is shown here during a spring '09 appearance on NET Television. Twohig, former Legal Aid client Willie Watson, far left, and Executive Director Dave Pantos appeared statewide on the "Consider This" program with moderator Cathy Wyatt. The program was broadcast more than a dozen times over a 10-day period.

winner for me because I'm able to help someone move away from an abusive person in their life and, at the same time, have a good chance of winning the case.

"Legal Aid is helpful because they prepare each case but don't micro-manage you as you go along."

Ultimately, Twohig says, the most rewarding gratification comes from not just winning cases, but in having a positive, direct impact on the lives of grateful people.

2009 PAI Attorneys

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2009 Audited

Operating Statement

REVENUE

Legal Services Corporation	
Basic Field	\$1,543,681
Native American.....	35,322
Migrant Worker.....	44,971
Technology Grant.....	0
Lancaster County Juvenile	
Court & JBC.....	312,147
Northeast Nebraska Area	
Agency on Aging.....	30,128
Nebraska Commission on	
Public Advocacy	1,427,235
Department of Housing &	
Urban Development.....	60,162
Violence Against Women Act.....	445,232
U.S. Department of Agriculture	164,532
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska	62,220
Interest on Lawyers Trust Fund	225,000
United Way of the Midlands	40,200
United Way Lancaster County.....	31,749
ElderAccessLine® Grant.....	50,548
HUD Homeless Grants	56,308
Civil Legal Serv. Fund.....	150,000
University of NE Med Center.....	16,643
Internal Revenue Service/LITC.....	22,605
Investment Income	270,246
Other Income.....	15,130
Contributions.....	379,131
Contributed Services	137,765
Total Revenue	5,520,955

Net Assets at 12-31-092,502,511

NOTE: Best practices for non-profit organizations indicate that the organization should have operating reserves equal to between 3 and 6 months operating expenses. At 12-31-09, Legal Aid of Nebraska had operating reserves of approximately 4.1 months, based on the 2010 budget.

EXPENDITURES

Salaries	\$2,991,196
Employee Benefits.....	824,059
Payroll Taxes.....	213,924
Contracted Services	196,407
Private Atty. Contracts.....	137,765
Discounted or Donated Private	
Attorney Involvement	137,765
Supplies.....	49,799
Telephone	105,452
Postage and Shipping.....	29,160
Occupancy.....	225,893
Printing.....	2,743
Recruiting	3,843
Transportation.....	120,691
Training	58,343
Maintenance and Repairs.....	16,712
Equipment Rental.....	27,467
Litigation Costs	31,167
Insurance.....	55,689
Dues.....	27,241
Technical Support.....	35,942
Miscellaneous	13,837
Library	25,901
Development.....	91,452
Depreciation.....	47,247
Total Expenditures	\$ 5,469,695

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Program Services – 89%.....	\$4,868,029
Admin. & Fundraising – 11%.....	601,666
Total Expenditures	\$ 5,469,695

Our Mission

To promote justice, dignity, hope, and self-sufficiency through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn.

Our Vision

To provide quality legal aid and access to the justice system for all persons living in Nebraska who have limited resources.

Our Values

- Equal Access to Justice
- Client Empowerment
- High Standard of Professionalism
- Efficient Use of Resources
- Collaboration
- Diversity

LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA does not discriminate on the basis of religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, color, age, marital status, citizen or authorized alien status, veteran status or disability in the administration of any of its programs.



Legal Aid of Nebraska is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization funded in part by the Legal Services Corporation.

LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA OFFICE LOCATIONS

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402-348-1069, 402-348-1068 fax

Lincoln – 941 "O" St., Suite 825, Lincoln, NE 68508

North Platte – 102 E. 3rd St., Suite 102, North Platte, NE 69103

Scottsbluff – 1423 1st Ave., Scottsbluff, NE 69363

Norfolk – 214 N. 7th St., Suite 10, Norfolk, NE 68701

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