

**Ask: Restore federal funding for LSC to at least the inflation-adjusted Fiscal Year 2010 level of \$482 million.**

- LSC and the legal aids it funds has long enjoyed bipartisan support because Americans believe in **justice for all**, not just those who can afford it.
- Legal aids help the **forgotten in our society**. We assist veterans, children, senior citizens, victims of domestic violence and many others. Whether it be with protection from foreclosure, domestic violence, fraud or addiction, we head off even bigger problems down the road that, if left unaddressed, would cost not only the individual but our society as a whole.
- Legal aids help **break the cycle of poverty** by getting Ohioans back on their feet and on the road to **self-sufficiency**.
- **Losing federal funding for LSC will mean that Ohio legal aids will lose roughly 30% of their funds.** In 2016, LSC provided \$12.2M of the \$43.2M statewide legal aid budget.

**Impact on Our State’s Economy & Communities/Federal Budget: Legal aid is a good investment.**

- Legal aid is a true partnership between charitable people and foundations, the state and the federal government. Ohio contributes more than \$2 for every federal dollar invested through privately-raised dollars, interest earned on lawyer trust accounts, civil filing fees and some state general revenue. In addition, legal aid trains and mobilizes private attorneys across Ohio who in 2016, volunteered more than 76,000 hours of free legal services a value of more than \$10.3M.
- Ohio’s legal aids increase Ohioans financial stability and improve our commitment to justice.
  - In 2017, Ohio’s legal aids increased clients’ income and assets by **\$7.1M**.
  - Since 2010, Ohio’s legal aids have **saved over 3,900 homes** from foreclosure. Each foreclosure can cost local governments up to \$34,000 in public resources for maintenance, public safety, inspections and evictions. Therefore, legal aid has **saved almost \$134M in public resources**.

*Based upon a 2010 economic impact study commissioned by OLAF – a new study to be commissioned:*

- Every dollar invested in Ohio legal aid generated a statewide return of 115%.
- In economic terms, Ohio legal aid produced \$106M in economic output for Ohio:
  - \$5.6M in tax revenue flowed into state, county, and municipal coffers, and
  - More than \$48M in earning went into the pockets of Ohio workers and businesses.
- Legal aid also sustained more than 700 jobs for Ohioans throughout the state in all sectors.

**Constituent Impact: Legal Aid gets Ohioans on the road to self-sufficiency.**

- Legal aid programs currently serve **115,958 Ohioans annually**, working in all 88 Ohio counties. Those helped include:
  - **4,977 veterans** who gained housing, or accessed appropriate medical care, or who obtained rightfully earned benefits.
  - **7,536 victims of domestic violence** who got timely protection orders.
  - **16,442 seniors** who received remedies from financial fraud or access to appropriate medical care or to earned pension benefits.
  - Ohio’s legal aids support **14 medical-legal partnerships** around the state improving health, housing and outcome for many of the **48,691 children** served in 2017.

## **Examples of Personal Impact**

### **A Veteran’s Path to Stability**

Recently, an honorably discharged Army veteran who was receiving assistance from a legal aid in an ongoing housing matter expressed concerns about benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The veteran was authorized to receive VA benefits, but because of his mental health issues and homelessness, he hadn’t been able to collect the monthly benefits or stabilize his life.

His legal aid lawyer spent time talking with him and learned that he had been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of trauma suffered while actively serving in the Army.

The veteran’s legal aid lawyer gathered both the medical and military evidence necessary to prove the veteran’s medical condition and that his condition was directly related to his military service. She then helped the veteran supplement his application with a detailed affidavit describing the trauma and sent everything to the VA as part of a comprehensive claim.

Simultaneously, she connected the veteran with housing and medical support services for veterans. The VA subsequently approved his application and found him eligible for 100% service-connected benefits. This means that he now receives VA healthcare, which has meant that he is in consistent and supportive counseling. In addition to the monthly payment of \$2,906, which is an annual income of \$34,872, the veteran also received a lump sum back award of \$49,000, for all of the months that he had been waiting for the VA to resolve his claim. As a result, the veteran is now living in safe and stable housing and receiving ongoing medical care. He is now also over-income for legal aid’s services.

Legal aids across Ohio daily help veterans address benefits, housing issues, medical care and consumer matters.

### **A Child and a Medical-Legal Partnership**

In 2015, a single mother of two took her infant son and first grade son to the baby’s well-baby visit at their local children’s hospital. The hospital houses a medical-legal partnership with their local legal aid.

As the visit was scheduled on a Tuesday morning, the doctor asked the mother why her first grader was with her and not in school. The mother explained that the first grader had been expelled the day before for having a plastic, neon green water gun in his backpack at school.

The mother explained that the child had received the water gun as a prize at a birthday party the Saturday before and had taken it to show friends in the after school program he attended. However, because of the school’s “zero tolerance” policy on weapons, the boy was expelled from 1<sup>st</sup> Grade for 180 days for having the toy in his backpack.

The doctor referred the woman and her son to the legal aid lawyer on site at the hospital supporting the medical-legal partnership. The legal aid lawyer reached out to the school on the child’s behalf. Within a day, legal aid had arranged for the child to return to 1<sup>st</sup> Grade without penalty.

Eleven medical-legal partnerships operate in Ohio ensuring healthy living environments, supportive education and good health for Ohio’s children and families.

### Helping Young Parents Address their Opiate Addiction

Earlier this year, a young couple in their mid-twenties realized that they risked losing custody of their two-year-old daughter if they didn't address their opiate addictions. The couple had struggled with heroin, but had refused treatment until they realized that they needed to do so to be able to care for their daughter safely and appropriately.

When beds became available at an in-patient treatment facility that would allow the young mother to bring her daughter with her as she received treatment and counseling, the couple found that they could not pay for treatment without Medicaid. However, Medicaid approval was going to take too long for approval to ensure that the bed space would remain available. In response, the couple reached out to their local legal aid office. A legal aid attorney was able to get an expedited approval of their Medicaid applications and they are now both participating in in-patient treatment for their addictions. Their daughter is with them and they are learning to work together as a stable and addiction-free family.

Around the state, legal aid helps those suffering from the opiate crisis access appropriate health care to treat their addiction and return their lives to those of productive citizens.

### Support for A Victim of Domestic Violence

In 2016, a mother learned that her husband was abusing her two children. She needed help to escape from him and to make her children safe and stable.

She heard about legal aid and reached out for help. Legal aid helped her divorce her abusive spouse and obtain sole custody of her two children. The legal aid lawyer also helped her identify and address some educational issues her youngest son was having, which the mother thought were merely the result of the trauma he had experienced.

Since her son was performing poorly in school, her legal aid lawyer arranged to have him tested. Through the education assessment, the mother learned that, in addition to trauma, her son suffers from multiple learning disabilities. In response, legal aid met with the school and agreed that the school would provide extra support to help the son through an Individualized Education Plan. As a result of legal aid's work, the mother and her children are now leading safe and stable lives and her youngest son is performing well in school.

Legal aids around Ohio work with victims of domestic violence to ensure safety, stability, housing and financial security for them and their children.

### More on Medical-Legal Partnerships:

- There are 14 MLPs in Ohio.
- MLPs place attorneys in health care settings to work with and alongside members of the health care team. Together they screen for and treat health-harming legal needs – related to insurance, public benefits, housing, education, employment, and safety – to improve health and well-being, and reduce health care utilization.
- When MLPs address civil legal needs as part of health care:
  - People with chronic illnesses are admitted to the hospital less frequently;
  - People report less stress; and,
  - Less money is spent on health care services for the people who would otherwise frequently go to the hospital.