“Injustice for one is injustice for all.”

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Our Mission

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri advances justice through legal representation, education and supportive services. We partner with the community to improve lives, promote fairness and create opportunities for those in need.


We act for others.
We are a voice for justice.
Our actions provide hope to those we serve.

Services are free.
All communications are confidential.
Interpreters provided.

Sve nase usluge su besplatne.
Razgovori se drze u tajnosti.
Prevodioci su obezbjedjeni.

Los servicios son gratuitos.
Todas las comunicaciones son confidenciales.
Intérpretes disponible.
Dear Friends,

As you read this 2019 Report to the Community, we are all reeling from the impact of a global pandemic. Fortunately, thanks to 64 years of experience, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri has been effectively responding to this unprecedented crisis.

Looking back at last year, we note that it was a banner year for both impact and outreach in our work. Landmark cases included:

- Representing the Wellston Tenant Association to save public housing from demolition;
- Addressing the rights of homeless students;
- Advocating for children who were dropped from Medicaid coverage;
- Securing a pro bono grant to expand the Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative and help distressed St. Louis neighborhoods.

Along with the Justice For All Ball, and the For The Common Good Awards, we engaged more people. We started the year by hosting the Legal Services Corporation Board of Directors’ national meeting for the federal agency that supports legal aid nationwide; hosted a statewide Legal Aid Conference; hosted a Justice & Jazz event to celebrate the life of longtime advocate, supporter and board member, Lenny Cervantes who unexpectedly passed away; and staged the inaugural Justice Speaks luncheon featuring Nina Totenberg, award-winning journalist with National Public Radio.

Most importantly, Legal Services advanced the cause of justice for those who face systemic inequality on a daily basis. By protecting people’s homes, advocating for homeless children and ensuring access to healthcare we balanced the playing field for those who have been marginalized, abused and ignored.

When we gain justice for our clients, we help make positive changes that benefit thousands of others in our community, today, tomorrow and for years to come.

Today, on the cusp of our 65th anniversary, with your help we continue to be in the vanguard of moving justice forward. Thank you for supporting this work and partnering with us to deliver ACTION. JUSTICE. HOPE. during these challenging times.

Thank You and Be Well,

Dan Glazier
Executive Director & General Counsel

Maria V. Perron
President, Board of Directors
Doris Hicks-Robinson admits that she is a life-long popcorn addict, and has wanted her own popcorn business since she was ten years old.

In 2015, she started making her own popcorn from home and selling it to family and friends. After a couple of years, Doris decided to expand the venture and took her ideas to The Center for the Acceleration of African American Business at Better Family Life. With their help, she created a business plan, formed a Limited Liability Company with her sister – Sistas’ Pop – and got her first business loan for equipment and materials. They also referred her to the Community Economic Development (CED) Microenterprise Program at Legal Services of Eastern Missouri for legal help.

Tracy James, Managing Attorney of the CED Program, says, “Doris came to us in late 2018, looking for help with trademark and registration details. She had already had her business plan and just needed help to make sure her business was legally protected.”

Since then, Legal Services has continued to support her growing business. CED staff helped with reviewing food handling requirements, insurance coverage and developing contracts, trademarks and copyrights. Ms. James also helped her consolidate her business listing when her sister stepped back and Doris became the sole proprietor.

Sistas’ Pop is currently sold at Tower Grove Farmers Market, two local retail locations, and online at Market Wagon. Doris has big plans for the future, including her own online store, hiring staff, creating fundraising events with local nonprofits, and expanding her popcorn range with seasonal flavors including Caramel Apple Pie, Banana Split and German Chocolate Cake.

“It was a leap of faith to commit all my time to the business, but I have so many ideas for new flavors and ways to expand the business that I know I will succeed!” she stated. “And I know Legal Services will be there to help as my business grows,” she added.
Highlights/Impact in 2019

WELLSTON Housing

In November 2018, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced its intention to demolish 201 public housing units in Wellston. This would have displaced more than 20% of the Wellston population which is nearly 97% black, with very little alternative affordable housing.

In December 2018, Wellston Mayor Nathaniel Griffin and a group of residents asked Legal Services of Eastern Missouri to represent the Wellston Tenant Association in their fight to preserve their homes and their community. Lisa D’Souza, the Teitelman Chair Attorney at Legal Services, petitioned HUD to halt its demolition plans until alternative solutions could be considered.

Months of negotiations followed between the Wellston Tenant Association represented by Legal Services, HUD, Mayor Nathaniel Griffin, St. Louis County Executive Sam Page, U.S. Senator Roy Blunt and Congressman Wm. Lacy Clay. In January 2020, HUD approved a proposal to preserve and improve the public housing units in Wellston.

MISSOURI MEDICAID Health & Benefits

A nationwide report by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation ranked Missouri among the bottom 10 states that automatically renew Medicaid recipients. In the first three months of 2019 more than 12,000 people, including 9,500 children, lost Medicaid coverage in Missouri.

In 2018, more than 70,000 Missourians were dropped from coverage. Joel Ferber, Legal Services’ Director of Advocacy, stated that every child represented by Legal Services was eligible for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Their coverage was lost solely because parents were unable to navigate the bureaucratic processes for re-enrollment.

Legal Services is working with other advocates and the state to ensure that more qualified families and children are not automatically dropped from Medicaid services.

NEIGHBORHOOD VACANCY Initiative

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri received a three-year, $316,361 Pro Bono Innovation Fund grant from the Legal Services Corporation to support expansion of the Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative. With the grant four local law firms – Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, Husch Blackwell LLP, Stinson LLP and Thompson Coburn LLP - will partner with St. Louis City neighborhood associations to revitalize their communities.

Law firms and pro bono volunteers will help tackle the problems of vacant and neglected property to stabilize housing, return vacant property to productive use and improve the quality of life in low-income North St. Louis City neighborhoods.

Jim Sandman, former Legal Services Corporation President, said, “These grants stimulate more participation by pro bono volunteers. They enhance public-private partnerships, leverage the federal investment in civil legal aid and allow our grantees to reach more people in need of civil legal assistance.”
Putting clients first is our mission ... representing the underserved, promoting clients’ rights and providing equal access to justice is what we do every day.

Who We Serve

- **76%** were women
- **56%** persons of color
- **96%** living at or below 200% poverty
- **33%** cases involved domestic violence
- **51%** people helped were children

16,800 Requests for help

11,380 People served through direct client work

16,000 More people assisted through community education, outreach, court helpdesk and referrals

95% Success rate for cases

$6.3 million Monetary benefits gained for clients

Types of Issues Solved

- **Immigration** 7%
- **Family Cases / Abuse and Neglect** 33%
- **Housing** 20%
- **Healthcare Insurance** 19%
- **Consumer** 2%
- **Education** 6%
- **Other** 8%
- **Public Benefits (Food Stamps, TANF, etc.)** 51%

Who We Serve

- **56%** persons of color
- **76%** were women
- **96%** living at or below 200% poverty
- **33%** cases involved domestic violence
- **51%** people helped were children
Individual Rights

Consumer Law
Represents clients with creditor/debtor problems, victims of deceptive business practices, or predatory lending and student loan defaults.

Elder Law
Represents clients 60 years of age or older.

Education Justice
Provides information about students’ rights and advocates for students facing unfair discipline.

Public Benefits
Helps with applications and appeals for public benefit programs, including Medicaid, TANF, food stamps and Social Security.

Veterans*
Serves veterans and their families with a variety of legal matters.

Communities

Community Economic Development - Microenterprise Program
Provides legal assistance and education for low-income entrepreneurs and community non-profits.

Community Economic Development - Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative
Provides community development services addressing blighted and vacant housing in St. Louis City neighborhoods.

Housing Law
Assists with landlord/tenant issues and other housing problems.

Immigration Law
Assists immigrants with residency and citizenship and serves victims of Human Trafficking.

Volunteer Lawyers Program
Provides pro bono opportunities for attorneys and law firms to help clients.

Health

Access to Health Coverage
Connecting Kids to Coverage helps uninsured children and families enroll in health insurance plans.

Advocates for Family Health
Helps pregnant women and families with children with Medicaid managed care.

Legal Advocacy for Adults with Mental Illness
Assists adults with serious mental illness with a variety of legal matters.

Families

Children's Legal Alliance
Provides advocacy for children with special education needs and homeless children.

Parental Justice Program
Representing parents in dependency cases for the reunification of families in St. Louis County Family Court. (Located in the St. Louis County Court Building)

Lasting Solutions Family Law
Helps survivors of domestic violence and their families achieve safety and stability.

Youth and Family Advocacy
Serves homeless and vulnerable youth and families in St. Louis County and City.

Regional Offices

Hannibal Office
Provides a full range of legal services to qualified low-income residents in fourteen Northeast Missouri counties (Adair, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby).

Union Office
Provides a full range of legal services to qualified low-income residents in four Missouri counties (Franklin, Lincoln, Warren and Washington).

* (Funded in part through an Equal Justice Works grant.)
Volunteer Support: Making a difference

2019 Volunteer Hours

- 22,200 Total Hours
- Students & Interns: 69%
- Attorneys: 20%
- Event Volunteers: 8%
- Board & Young Friends Board: 2%
- Other Professional Services: 1%

Breakdown of cases handled by Volunteer Lawyers Program

- Housing: 32%
- Wills & Advance Directives: 29%
- Family Law: 18%
- Adult & Minor Guardianships: 15%
- Individual Rights & Other Matters: 6%
- Professional Services: 3%

Value of pro bono volunteer work: $1,188,030

Volunteer Lawyers Program
- Cases Handled: 313
- New Volunteers Added: 21
- Active Volunteer Lawyers: 303
- Legal Clinics/Classes & Community Meetings: 14

Community Economic Development - Microenterprise Program
- Cases Handled: 171
- New Volunteers Added: 40
- Active Volunteer Lawyers: 82
- Legal Clinics/Classes & Community Meetings: 164

Community Economic Development - Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative
- Cases Handled: 25
- New Volunteers Added: 67
- Active Volunteer Lawyers: 105
- Legal Clinics/Classes & Community Meetings: 300+
Since 1986 Saint Louis Crisis Nursery has helped struggling families and communities in the region. CEO DiAnne Mueller says, “We provide everything a family needs to keep moving toward success. Whatever it is that a family is struggling with, if we can help, we will.” Today, Crisis Nursery has five locations and ten outreach centers, serving nearly 5,000 children from birth through age 12 each year.

Services include: emergency care; a 24/7 helpline; physicals and assistance with food, diapers, utility and rent payments. Through the Family Empowerment Program, the Crisis Nursery also provides crisis counseling and case management and helps parents find stable homes, jobs, and more. Legal Services began working with Saint Louis Crisis Nursery through the Family Empowerment Program.

“In 2018 we were opening an expanded Outreach Center in North St. Louis. We asked our families and the Parental Advisory Board what would be most helpful to them. Resoundingly, the answer was legal services,” Mueller explained. “Our families feel like they have no one to represent them. So we talked with the St. Louis Mental Health Board, and they helped us develop a partnership with Legal Services,” she explained. “Within a month, we had a team providing legal clinics at our North St. Louis Outreach Center, and we had families lining up to get help,” she added.

Legal Services hosts a monthly legal clinic for Crisis Nursery families needing help. Since 2018, Legal Services has represented clients in more than 50 legal cases and has helped hundreds more through legal information and referrals.

“We really enjoy working with the Crisis Nursery staff and clients. The staff is so client-focused and want to help families get whatever they need,” stated Managing Attorney Dan Underwood. “The Crisis Nursery clients are very engaged and are motivated to take whatever steps are needed to resolve their legal issues.”

“Many families were in danger of being evicted, and the minute an attorney becomes involved, things change for the better. Just having a lawyer reaching out to a landlord, or sending a letter is often enough to change the whole situation,” Mueller explained.

“It means the world to me to know that children aren’t sleeping in the streets or living in a car, thanks to Legal Services,” Mueller says. “I truly appreciate our partnership with Legal Services. It’s not just life-changing. In many ways, it’s life-saving.”
For The Common Good Awards

More than 200 guests joined us to celebrate the achievements of volunteers, community agencies and elected officials who partner with Legal Services to help serve clients.

Awardees included:
Hon. Stephen N. Limbaugh, Sr.; Dana Malkus; State Senators S. Kiki Curls & Jamilah Nasheed; Mary Sullivan-Thomas; April Waugh; BDO USA, LLP; Home Sweet Home; Marygrove; Saint Louis Crisis Nursery; and Washington University Office of General Counsel.

Justice & Jazz:
A Tribute to Lenny Cervantes

This special event celebrated the legacy of the late Lenny Cervantes. More than 120 of Lenny’s friends, family and colleagues attended the evening of jazz, Lenny’s favorite. The tribute event was co-hosted by Legal Services and Jazz St. Louis, with support from the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys.

Missouri Legal Aid Conference

With the generous support from the Missouri Bar Foundation, Legal Services hosted a two-day statewide Legal Aid Conference with almost 200 participants. Topics focused on education about current legal aid issues and the best strategies to engage and understand our clients’ needs.

Legal Services Corporation Board Visit

In January 2019 we hosted a special reception for the national Legal Services Corporation’s Board meeting at the St. Louis offices of Stinson LLP to honor pro bono champions from across the state.
More than 400 guests joined us for the 29th Annual Justice For All Ball, St. Louis' Premiere Legal Soiree. This classic cocktail party event was Co-Chaired by Paula Finlay and Priscilla Murray with Auction Chair Tracy Tabb and Honorary Chairs Hon. Susan E. Block, Hon. Robert M. Clayton, II and Hon. Stephen N. Limbaugh, Sr.

Thanks to the support of our sponsors: Presenting Sponsor – Missouri Lawyers Weekly; Supporting Sponsors - Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner; Emerson and Thompson Coburn, LLP; and Contributing Sponsors - Armstrong Teasdale, LLP; Association of Corporate Counsel – St. Louis Chapter; Blitz Bardgett & Deutsch; Brown & James, P.C.; Capes Sokol; Dowd Bennett LLP; Gray, Ritter & Graham, P.C; Husch Blackwell LLP; Newman, Bronson & Wallis; Polsinelli; Stange Law Firm, PC; The Bar Plan Mutual Insurance Co.; and The Simon Law Firm, P.C.

Justice Speaks

NPR correspondent, Nina Totenberg

This event was the first in a series of annual conversations about access to justice and civil rights, and featured NPR’s award-winning Legal Correspondent, Nina Totenberg as keynote speaker. Attended by more than 400 guests, this event successfully raised much-needed funds for Legal Services, while shining a spotlight on civil legal issues.

Sponsors included St. Louis Public Radio; Missouri Lawyers Media; Stange Law Firm; The Bar Plan Mutual Insurance Co.; and The Simon Law Firm, P.C.
Young Friends Board Members (L to R)

Activities
- Provided more than 200 hours of volunteer services.
- Adopted a client’s family through the “100 Neediest Cases” campaign.
- Collected cleaning and personal care supplies for clients.
- Hosted eight member events.

2019 Young Friends Board
President: Michael R. Cherba, Riezman Berger
Vice President: Ryan C. Turnage, Schnucks Market, Inc.
Secretary: Nino Przulj, Thompson Coburn

Members
MacKenzie Allan; Washington University Law School Representative
Katherine Fechte; Greensfelder
Laura Halfmann-Morris; Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
Mary Hirsch, Saint Louis University Law School Representative
Luke Jackson; Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner
Elizabeth Lenivy; The Simon Law Firm, P.C.
Loren T. Menefee; Bayer
J. Thomas Mihalczko, III; Bollwerk & Tatlow, LLC
Kara Moskowitz; University of Missouri – St. Louis
Vannah Shaw; St. Louis County Justice Services
Ericka Simpson Conner; Husch Blackwell

Board of Directors, 2019

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The Perron Law Firm, PC

Co-Vice President
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Polsinelli PC

Co-Vice President
James McConnell
Attorney at law

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Assistant Treasurer
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Burger Law

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Assistant Secretary
Dorothy Rush
Client Eligible Board Member

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St. Louis County Family Court

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AT&T

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Chris Hayes
Emerson

Agnes Hill
Client Eligible Board Member

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Littler

Vennie Sharp
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John Simon
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Andrea Stanley
Brown & Croupen

Mavis Thompson
St. Louis City License Collector

Delores Verner
Client Eligible Board Member

Victor Washington
Client Eligible Board Member

Thayer L. Weaver, Jr.
TLW & Associates

Barbara Whiting
Client Eligible Board Member

Pearl Williams
Client Eligible Board Member
Supporting the Rights of Homeless Students

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law ensuring the education of children experiencing homelessness. In 2018, a lawsuit under this act was brought by Legal Services on behalf of two homeless students.

The lawsuit claimed that the Riverview Gardens School District was violating the rights of homeless students by delaying or preventing their enrollment, failing to provide transportation to school, failing to provide support for toxic stress, transferring them into online alternative programs with no teacher support, and issuing them discriminatory discipline.

A settlement and Consent Decree was reached in February 2020 with the school district and the state of Missouri, under which the school district will immediately enroll homeless students and provide them with transportation and support services. Under the settlement, federal courts can monitor statewide implementation of the consent decree for three years.

“We are pleased that the parties were able to work together in a collaborative way to come up with a settlement that improves access to education for this extremely vulnerable group of students,” said Joel Ferber, Director of Advocacy at Legal Services of Eastern Missouri.

The Consent Decree is the first of its kind in Missouri and this settlement will apply to all school districts statewide, substantially changing state and district policies regarding access to education for students experiencing homelessness.

Public Counsel, a pro bono law firm, and the Arnold & Porter law firm partnered with Legal Services to achieve this landmark settlement.
**2019 Financial Statement**

### Revenue

- **Government Grants**: $5,202,180
- **Public Contributions United Way**: $1,169,933
- **Donated Services**: $1,188,030
- **Private Foundation Grants**: $1,000,371
- **Special Events**: $218,917
- **Other**: $321,411*

**Total:** $9,100,842

### Expenses

- **Program Services**: $8,043,949**
- **Administration/General**: $1,098,537
- **Fundraising**: $380,059
- **Special Events**: $76,411

**Total:** $9,598,056

### Balance Sheet Information

**Total Net Assets**

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<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<td>$12,965,248***</td>
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Notes:

*Includes Program Income ($7,842); Investment Income ($283,653); Misc. Income ($29,916).

**Includes value of Pro Bono donated services.

***Includes $1,927,149 in property, furniture and equipment; $1,074,065 of donor restricted funds; and board designated funds consisting of $1,000,000 for the Hon. Richard B. Teitelman Fund; $1,150,000 for the Building Capital and Litigation Expenses Reserve fund; and $1,500,000 for the Cy Pres Reserve fund for operations.

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri is a grantee of the federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and complies with all LSC conditions and prohibitions in acceptance of all funds. The 2019 independent audit is available at [www.lsem.org/about/financial-and-tax-info/](http://www.lsem.org/about/financial-and-tax-info/)
Legal Services of Eastern Missouri depends on gifts, grants and contributions for most of its income. Thank you to the following donors for supporting our work and providing ACTION. JUSTICE. HOPE.

Below is a list of general donations and grants received in 2019. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions, and thank you to the many donors not listed here, who also play an important part in helping us fulfil our commitment to the community.

**Donors**

**CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER ENTITIES**

**$100,000+**
- Legal Services Corporation
- Missouri Bar Foundation
- Missouri Basic Civil Legal Services Fund
- Missouri Department of Social Services
- Missouri Foundation for Health
- Missouri Lawyer Trust Fund Account
- St. Louis County Children’s Service Fund
- St. Louis Mental Health Board
- United Way of Greater St. Louis
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**$50,000+**
- Husch Blackwell, LLP
- The Simon Law Firm, P.C.
- Thompson Coburn LLP

**$10,000 - $99,999**
- Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP
- Capes Sokol
- Gray, Ritter & Graham, P.C.
- Lewis Rice LLC
- Polsinelli PC

**$5,000 - $9,999**
- Armstrong Teasdale LLP
- Blitz, Bardgett & Deutsch, LC
- Brown & James, P.C.
- Dowd Bennett LLP
- Newman Bronson & Wallis
- Ryan R. Cox & Associates, L.L.C.
- Sandberg, Phoenix & Von Gontard, P.C.
- Simmons Hanly Conroy
- Spencer Fane LLP
- Stange Law Firm, PC

**$1,000 - $4,999**
- Carmody MacDonald P.C.
- Dobson, Goldberg, Berns & Rich, LLP
- Dowd & Dowd, P.C.
- Karl Law Center, LLC
- Law Office of John S. Wallach, P.C.
- Mandel & Mandel, L.L.P.
- Perron Law Firm, PC
- Robb & Robb, LLC
- Shands, Elbert, Gianoulakis & Giljum, LLP
- Stinson LLP
- USA&M Midwest, Inc.

“From the first time I talked to Legal Services, they were just amazing. I don’t know what I would have done without your help.”

*Bernice, Health & Welfare client*
“Legal Services helped make sure I have the tools I need for my business to be successful. Thank you.”

AJ, Microenterprise client

$250 - $999
Brinkman & Alter
Brown & Crouppen
Buckley & Buckley, L.L.C.
Danna McKitrick, P.C.
Devereaux, Stokes, Fernandez & Leonard, P.C.
Downey Law Group LLC
Faerber & Anderson, P.C.
Flanagan & Peel, P.C.
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Schultz & Myers LLC
The Campbell Law Firm, LLC
The Oliver Group
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Wasinger Daming, LC
Wolfgram & Associates, PC
Wyne and Merritt, PC

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$5,000 - $9,999
Senator & Mrs. John C. Danforth
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Mr. Eric Friedman
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Mr. & Mrs. John C. Madden
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Ms. Shulamith Simon

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Mr. and Mrs. Andrew M. Bleyer
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Ms. Karen W. Fries
Mr. Ameer Gado
Mr. & Mrs. James B. Gallagher
Mr. & Mrs. Steven E. Garlock
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Ms. Mary Shea Tucker & Mr. Charles Berger
Mr. & Mrs. James W. Sherby
Ms. Shulamith Simon
Legal Services of Eastern Missouri is proud to be a Legal Services Corporation (LSC) grantee, and we comply with all LSC conditions and prohibitions in acceptance of all funds. The 2019 independent audit is available at www.lsem.org/about/financial-and-tax-info/
Rob Swearingen of Legal Services of Eastern Missouri represents several of the tenants. Swearingen said, “tenants should not be required to pay rent if their apartment is uninhabitable.”

News 4 Investigates: “I shouldn’t have to fear for my life;” Tenants describe unlivable conditions at St. Louis apartment complex

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Grant Will Support Free Legal Help In St. Louis Neighborhoods With Vacant Properties

Peter Hoffman, managing attorney of the Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative, wants to keep residents at the forefront of the program. He said the funding will allow the initiative to provide free legal assistance aimed at reducing vacancy, promoting neighborhood stability and community-driven revitalization.