



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**Facing Eviction**

Travel restrictions

Settlement delay

**Covid Testing**

**Cancelled**

Social Distancing

**Unemployment**

Rescheduled

Loss of income

**furlough**

**Quarantined**

**Laid off**

Drive thru Foodbanks

Virtual Events

**Courts closed**

Default on mortgage

**Pandemic**

**Wear Your Mask**

Rent Overdue

**Delay**

Medical bills

emergency

Work from home

**Crisis**

No scheduled visits



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Dear Friends,

First, we want to thank you for the generous support we received throughout 2020 as we responded to the numerous issues created by the pandemic.

We are pleased to report that, in tandem with our partners, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri rose to meet the challenges of COVID-19. This report details how we added services, adapted to community needs and marshalled resources to help families survive critical and life-threatening situations.

- Created a new task force of staff and volunteers to help with unemployment applications and appeals.
- Convened staff from across the agency to help with a community response to the housing and eviction crisis impacting so many families.
- Added a new attorney position to help families facing utility cut-offs.
- Developed a library of online materials and webinars to help families and community partners deal with legal issues including children's special education needs, help for small businesses and information about COVID-19 relief funds.

In spite of quarantines, closed courts and working from home, we did what we have always done for the past 65 years...we found a way to help our clients and the community by making sure everyone has equal access to resources and care.

**We act for others ...**

**We are a voice for justice ...**

**We provide hope for those in need.**

We could not have done this critical work without our partnership with you. On behalf of the Staff and Board, thank you.

Dan Glazier  
Executive Director

Maria Perron  
President, Board of Directors

## 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.

# Adapting to meet new needs



## Overcoming Adversity

Ann's\* husband was incarcerated for abusing her. When she tried to move away, her husband's family took her children and refused to return them. His family used the legal system to keep Ann's children from her by filing false claims against her.

Ann turned to Legal Services for help, but the pandemic restrictions made defending these charges and regaining her children far more difficult. Attorneys were unable to meet with Ann and had to help her navigate technology for a virtual hearing.

Despite these obstacles, the judge ruled in Ann's favor and she was reunited with her children. Ann and her children are now living in a safe environment free from violence. She has a stable job and hopes for a new beginning for her family.

*\*Clients' names have been changed to protect their identity.*

In 2020 we faced new and unique challenges. We are proud that we continue to be a front-line provider throughout the crisis. The struggle continues and we stay committed to serving with **ACTION. JUSTICE. HOPE.**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly devastating for low-income families. For many, paying the rent, balancing bills and keeping their families fed has always been a challenge. The devastation of pandemic restrictions impacted their lives much more than most. For the first time, many families faced unemployment, loss of health insurance, food shortages, virtual learning for their children, and the threat of eviction.

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri quickly responded to the needs of the community and worked alongside community partners to help keep people safe, informed of their rights and equipped with the resources they needed during rapidly changing situations.

## This included:

- **Virtual meetings with staff and community partners** and the local agencies and pandemic task forces to effectively disseminate new information to address client needs.
- **Identifying and responding to new needs such as:**
  - Help with applications for unemployment, food stamps, tax credits, and health insurance.
  - Providing anti-eviction information and advocacy.
  - Sharing resources for online learning and advocating for kids with special education needs who are struggling with virtual learning.
  - Supporting the small businesses most severely impacted by the pandemic.
- **Adapting to serve clients in virtual courtrooms** for access to vital resources, such as orders of protection.
- **Creating extensive online resources** providing information and pandemic resources for clients.
- **Seeking out and securing new funding** to expand resources to help those in need.

# Responding to Urgent Issues



ST. LOUIS' #1 SOURCE FOR NEWS | PRINT EDITION | E EDITION | APPS

**ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**

## **New protections offered to tenants during coronavirus pandemic**

June 4, 2020 by Joel Ferber

“... an unprecedented number of tenants may need legal help. It is critical that landlords work with tenants to create reasonable payment agreements and avoid unnecessary late fees that could extend and exacerbate the crisis for low-income families. The coronavirus relief act’s tenant protections are an important step in ensuring that the pandemic and the resulting financial crisis do not increase homelessness or create new cycles of debt for the vulnerable families in our community.”

**ACTION.** Legal Services is partnering with the COVID-19 Regional Response Teams’ Housing and Courts Response Group, organized by Forward Through Ferguson to ensure equitable treatment for low-income tenants and homeowners to mitigate the impact of eviction, foreclosure and homelessness.

s|t|l|p|r

## **Missourians Struggle With Unemployment Applications As State Juggles Record-Level Claims**

By KAE M. PETRIN • 5/7/20

“Increased applications and call volume have spurred Legal Services of Eastern Missouri to help low income workers apply for unemployment benefits. The nonprofit organization also offers legal aid and assists people appeal denied claims”.

**ACTION.** When the need for assistance with unemployment benefit applications increased, Legal Services’ Volunteer Lawyers Program organized and trained a cross-department team of lawyers, paralegals and volunteers to help callers with a variety of unemployment benefit questions. In 2020 the team responded to more than 14,600 calls for help. We assisted clients applying for benefits and appealing denials and/or demands for refund of benefits.

# THE ST. LOUIS AMERICAN

October 6, 2020 • By Hopey Fink and Amanda J. Schneider

## Know Your Rights: education during COVID-19 Legal Services of Eastern Missouri offers advice to parents and students.

“Whether your school district is still entirely online or moving toward a hybrid or in-person plan, a lot has changed ... due to COVID-19. But some things have not changed: if you are a student or a parent or guardian, you have rights from federal and state laws ... no matter your schooling environment.”

**ACTION.** Legal Services’ advocacy resulted in a landmark ruling protecting the rights of all Missouri children to an appropriate education, even during school closures and remote learning.

## The Right to an Education: A Client Story



When schools switched to virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Education Justice Program learned of a school district charging a homeless student \$25 for a Chromebook for remote learning.

On behalf of the client, Legal Services informed both the school district and the Missouri Department of Education that charging a technology fee may be unconstitutional when children are entirely reliant on a device to access education.

As a result, the school district agreed to provide a Chromebook and a hot spot to all families as needed for the 2020-2021 school year. The school district also agreed to provide tutoring for three students who, as a result of this fee, were unable to access remote learning for the spring semester 2020.

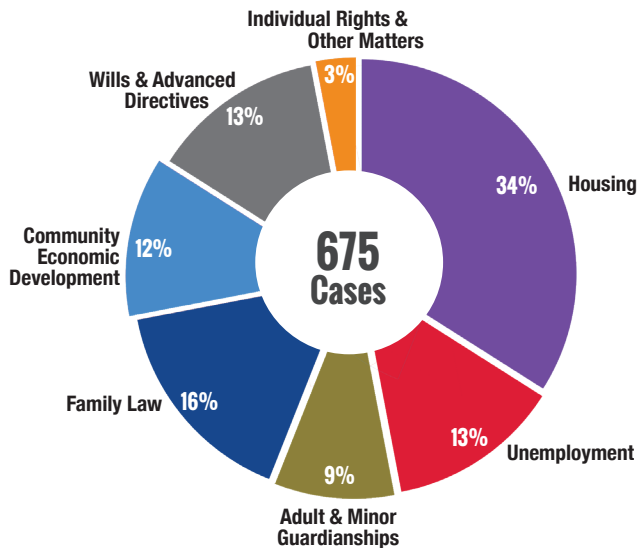
In addition, the Missouri Department of Education agreed to issue guidance to all school districts that the charge of any fees for technology during a time of remote learning, when no option for in-person learning was available, may be unconstitutional.

# Volunteers

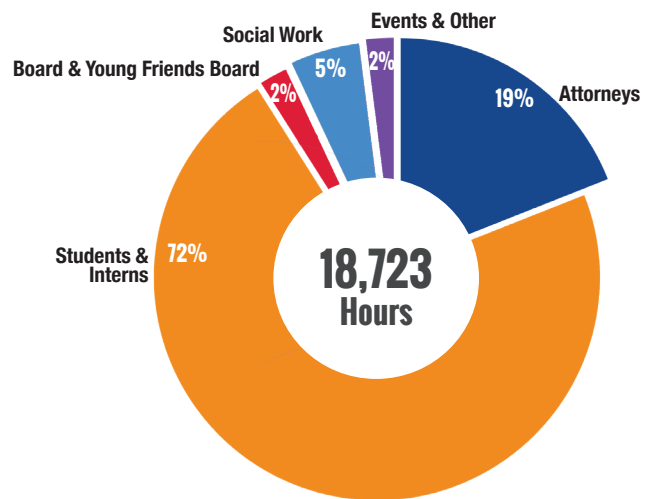
Legal Services is very grateful for the significant impact of volunteers in 2020!

The value of contributed hours by volunteer lawyers, paralegals, law students, social workers and others totaled \$893,985 as reported in the 2020 independent audit. The breakdown of hours and cases is shown below.

## Breakdown of Cases



## Total Volunteer Hours




**\$893,985**  
Value of Pro Bono



**68**  
New Volunteers Added



**186**  
Legal Clinics/Classes & Community Meetings

## Young Friends of Legal Services

Despite the unique challenges of 2020, the Young Friends of Legal Services still connected via zoom bi-monthly to support the agency and again adopted one of our 100 Neediest Families to provide support during the holidays.

**President:** Michael Cherba

**Vice President:** Ryan Turnage

**Secretary:** Nino Przulj

**Board Members:** Mackenzie Allen; Katherine Fechte; Laura Halfmann-Morris; Remington Harris; Lucas Jackson; Elizabeth Lenivy; Loren Menefee; J. Thomas Mihalcz, II; Kara Moskowitz; Vannah Shaw; Ericka Simpson-Conner.

# Stepping up to address new needs.

New Funders in 2020



**Legal Services' staff, board and volunteers are extremely grateful for the generous support received during the difficult pandemic of 2020.**

The generosity of Legal Services' supporters, partners and funders enabled us to quickly develop new strategies to help clients during the pandemic.

In addition to annual operating support and program grant funding, in 2020 Legal Services was also fortunate that new grant resources became available to maintain – and in some cases expand - services for those struggling because of the pandemic.

## **New grants for 2020 included:**

- **Legal Services Corporation:**  
Telework capacity building and COVID-19 response
- **Flourish-St. Louis:**  
Direct client assistance
- **United Way of Greater St. Louis:**  
Phase 2 COVID-19 response
- **St. Louis Community Foundation:**  
Utility advocacy and COVID-19 response
- **Wells Fargo:**  
Housing stability
- **St. Louis County:**  
CARES humanitarian response
- **St. Louis City:**  
CARES Act funding
- **St. Louis Regional Business Council:**  
Direct client assistance

Thanks to these gifts, grants and donations, we were able to address the pressing needs of clients in a timely manner, even while the staff worked from home, the courts were closed and a public lock-down was in place.

**Thanks to you, ACTION. JUSTICE. HOPE. continued.**

# Services

## 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.

## Communities

### Community Economic Development - Microenterprise Program

Provides legal assistance and education for low-income entrepreneurs and community nonprofits.

### 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, eviction, utilities, 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).



# Service Statistics

**96%**  
of those served  
were at or  
below 200%  
poverty  
level



**77%**  
of clients  
were women



**50%**  
of those  
served  
were children



**50%**  
of clients  
were BIPOC



**32%**  
of cases  
involved  
domestic  
violence



**114,630+** Requests for help

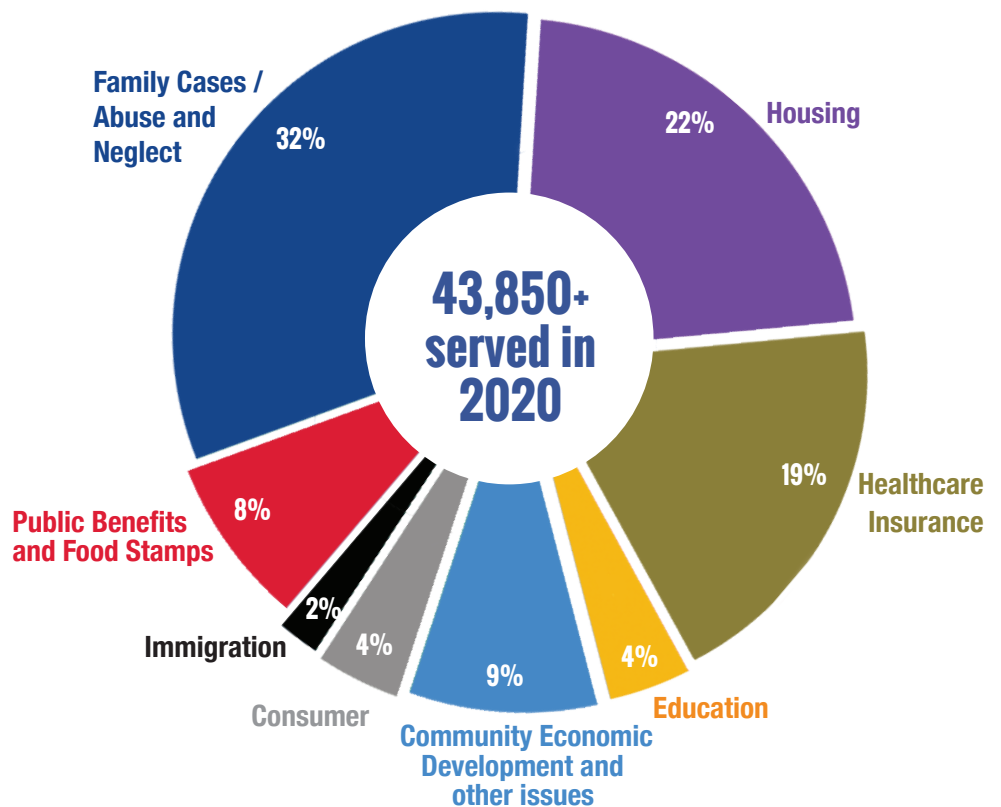
**8,850** People served through direct client work

**35,000** More people assisted through community education, outreach, court helpdesk and referrals

**96%** Success rate for cases

**\$4.8 million** Monetary benefits gained for clients.

## Types of Issues Solved



# 2020 Agency Financials

## Revenue

Government Grants	\$6,431,227*
Public Contributions & United Way	\$1,127,977
Donated Services	\$823,985
Private Foundation Grants	\$1,326,807
Special Events	\$ 153,287
Other	\$ 322,911
<b>Investment Income</b>	<b>\$ 571,422</b>

Total: \$10,757,616

## Expenses

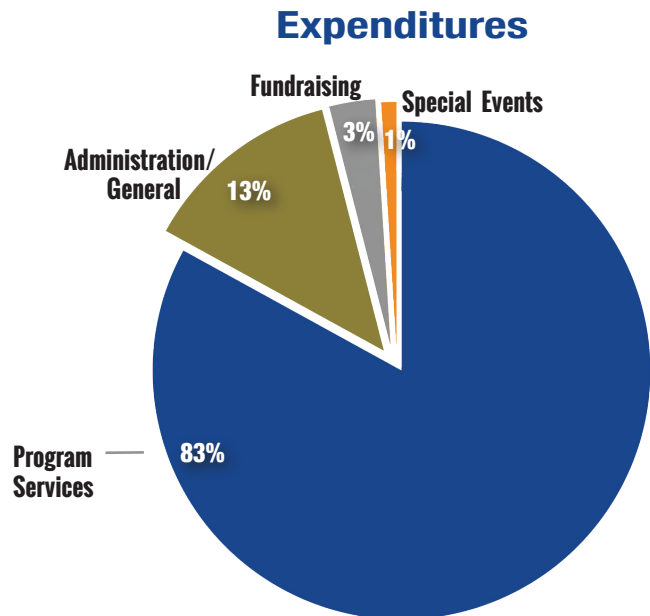
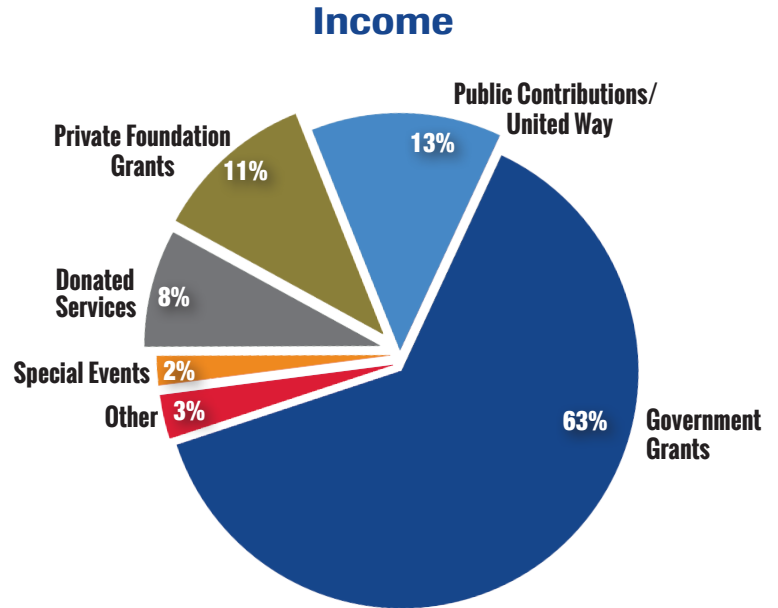
Program Expenses	\$7,642,684**
Administration/General	\$1,215,487
Fundraising	\$ 299,404
Special Events	\$ 76,364

Total: \$9,233,939

## Balance Sheet Information

### Total Net Assets

2019	2020
\$12,467,134***	\$13,990,811



\*Includes Legal Services Corporation's special grants: \$165,255 COVID 19 Response; \$18,660 Teleworking

\*\*Includes value of Pro Bono donated services.

\*\*\*Includes a one-time Cy Pres award of \$2,841,020: \$1 million designated for the Hon. Richard B Teitelman Fund; \$1,150,000 designated to the Building Capital and Litigation Expenses Reserve Fund; \$657,894 designated to the Cy Pres Reserve Fund for operations.

NOTE: Legal Services of Eastern Missouri received a \$600,000 Payroll Protection Program loan in 2020 which was fully forgiven in 2020.

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 2020 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 2020. 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, OTHER ENTITIES

### \$100,000+

Legal Services Corporation  
 St. Louis Community Foundation  
 Missouri Bar Foundation  
 Missouri Basic Civil Legal Services Fund  
 Missouri Department of Social Services  
 Missouri Foundation for Health  
 Missouri Lawyers Trust Fund Account  
 St. Louis County Children's Service Fund  
 St. Louis Mental Health Board  
 United Way of Greater St. Louis  
 US Department of Health & Human Services  
 Wells Fargo, LLC

### \$50,000 - \$99,999

St. Louis Development Corporation

### \$20,000 - \$49,999

American Direct Marketing Resources, LLC  
 Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis  
 Northeast Missouri Area Agency of Aging  
 St. Louis Area Agency on Aging  
 St. Louis City Department of Health: Ryan White/HIV AIDS Program

### \$10,000 - \$19,999

Aging Ahead  
 Citi  
 Deaconess Foundation  
 Emerson Charitable Trust  
 Franklin County Area United Way  
 Missouri Department of Public Safety  
 PNC Foundation

### 1,000 - \$9,999

AJ Bitker Charitable Foundation  
 American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation  
 Association of Corporate Counsel – St. Louis  
 AT&T Foundation  
 Boeing Employees Community Fund  
 Buffalo Township United Fund  
 Commerce Bancshares Foundation  
 Equal Justice America Inc.  
 Franklin County Community Resource Board  
 Mary Ranken Jordan & Ettie Jordan Charitable  
 Montgomery Area United Way  
 New Covenant Legal Services  
 Peace UCC  
 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
 Sandcastle Foundation  
 St. Louis Economic Development Partnership  
 Stanley & Lucy Lopata Charitable Foundation  
 STLRB Family Foundation  
 The Daniel & Henry Company  
 Thompson Reuters

### \$250 - \$999

Family Court of St. Louis County  
 Lawyers Association of St. Louis  
 Pecha Family Foundation  
 Stern Family Charitable Trust  
 The Bar Plan Mutual Insurance Co.  
 Tower Grove Neighborhood CDC  
 United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania  
 United Way of the Mark Twain Area

## LAW FIRMS

### \$50,000+

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 Butsch, Robert & Associates, LLC\*  
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 Husch Blackwell, LLP  
 Thompson Coburn LLP

### \$20,000 - \$49,999

Capes Sokol  
 The Simon Law Firm, P.C.

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 Stinson LLP

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 Brown & James, P.C.  
 Burger Law  
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Mr. Sam Yoffie & Mrs. Erin Yoffie

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### Ken Chackes

Ms. Malgorzata Krych-Goldberg

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### Laura Halfmann-Morris

Ms. Theresa Gilmore

### Peter Hoffman and the Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative

Lewis Place Improvement  
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### Speakers at their CLE Seminar:

**Timothy Garnett, Hon. Michael T. Jamison, Hon. Mary Bruntrager & Hon. Christopher E. McGraugh**  
USA&M Midwest, Inc.

### Speakers at their CLE Seminar:

**Gary K. Burger, Jr., Seth Lambden, Alan Pratzel, Hon. Patricia Riehl, Steve Strum & Michael L. Young**  
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USA&M Midwest, Inc.

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Mr. David E. Brown &  
Ms. Cheryl Green

### Eugene K. Buckley

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Razgovori se drže u tajnosti.  
Prevodioci su obezbeđeni.

Los servicios son gratuitos.  
Todas las comunicaciones  
son confidenciales.  
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# Adapting to Change: Going Virtual

Pandemic restrictions challenged every aspect of our work and fundraising in 2020. This need required a quick response and new, virtual strategies that were immediate and accessible.



**26** Webinars  
**22,018** Views

- **Created Facebook Live and Zoom informational sessions** to address urgent questions concerning unemployment benefits and other matters, including food stamps, housing rights, special education rights and how to access pandemic resources.



**17** Self-Help  
Videos Created

- **Created a video library** on Legal Services' YouTube channel to help clients navigate applications for unemployment benefits, food stamps and how to claim pandemic tax credits, etc.



**80** Online Resources  
available statewide

- **Created a comprehensive, online library** of COVID-19 reference materials including more than 30 fact sheets and more than 50 links to other community resources.



**9** Volunteers,  
Firms and Partners  
Recognized for Pro  
Bono Support

- **Presented the 2020 "For The Common Good" awards volunteer recognition event** virtually through a livestream.



**963** First Edition  
e-Newsletter  
Views

- **Launched an e-newsletter** for donors, volunteers and community partners.

**We thank our 2020 sponsors who made this transition to virtual communications/events possible:**

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Safe Connections

**Thank you**  
to all our 2020 supporters and community partners who made it possible for us to continue providing **Action. Justice. Hope.**

A Safe Place

St. Louis County Library

Lashly Baer, PC

Hispanic Bar Association

Beyond Housing

Prosperity Connection

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The Perron Law Firm

Generate Health STL

Peoples Health Center

Casa de Salud

Epworth Children & Family Services

Armstrong Teasdale

Jefferson County Family Violence Council

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St. Louis Area Agency on Aging

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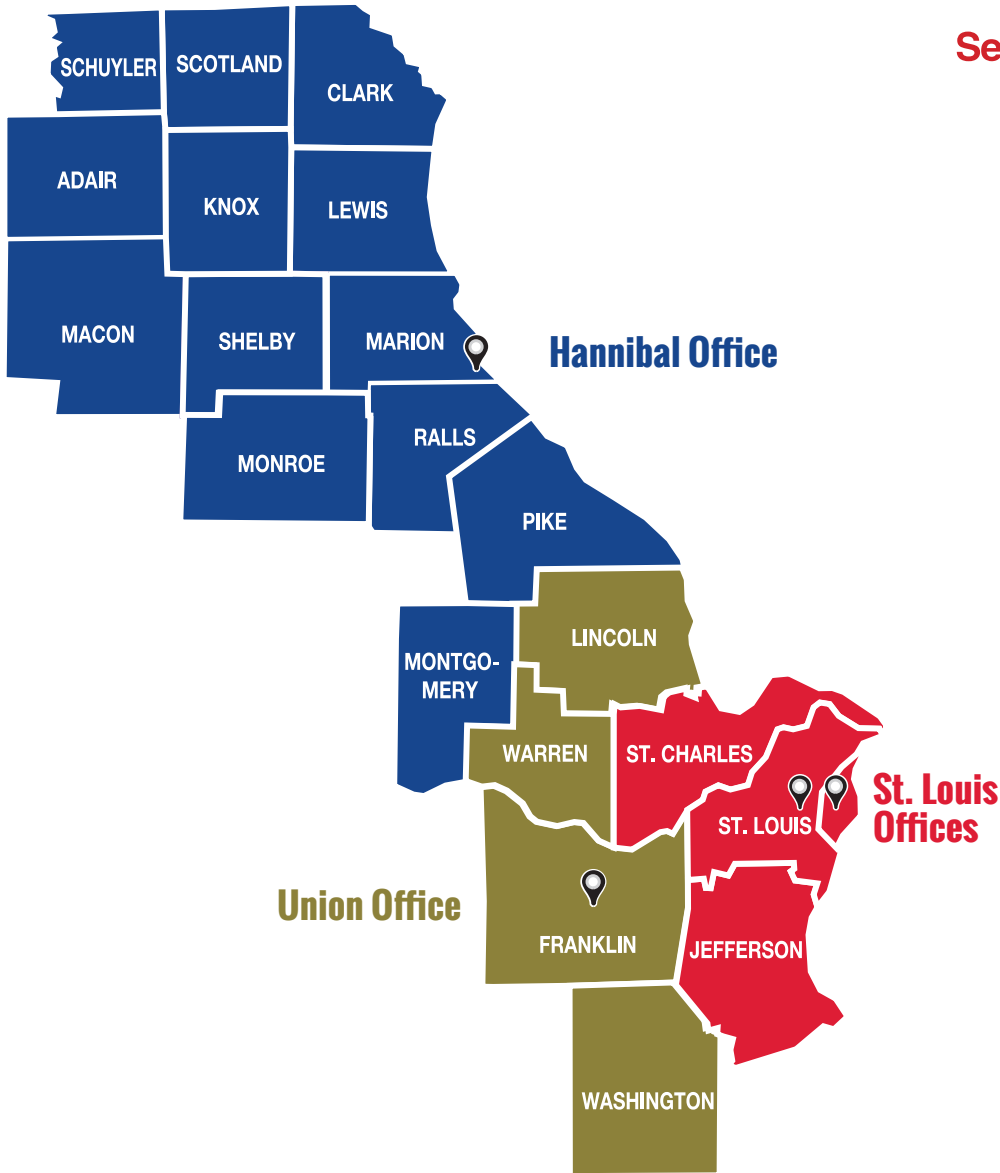
Southside Welfare Rights Organization

PROMO

St. Louis Community Foundation

St. Martha's Hall

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



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