



2019

ANNUAL REPORT

LEGAL SERVICES
of
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

2019 Annual **Report**

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About **Us**

Our Mission

The mission of Legal Services of Northern California is to provide quality legal services to empower the poor to identify and defeat the causes and effects of poverty within our community, efficiently utilizing all available resources.

Our Work

For more than 63 years, Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC) has been fighting for the civil rights of our clients. LSNC is the strong voice that continues to speak out on behalf of low income people in our communities, even as the state and local "safety nets" for the poor continue to crumble.

Most of the local offices that make up LSNC began as offshoots of a volunteer program or a special grant project. The oldest program began in Sacramento County in 1956. For a many years the Sacramento, Auburn, Woodland, Solano, Chico, Redding, and Eureka/Ukiah offices were independent organizations created solely to benefit the low-income residents in their particular communities. Today, all these disparate legal aid programs are integrated into a single organization. As part of a unified organization, each field office is stronger and together they serve low-income families, individuals, and seniors in 23 northern California counties.



United Way of the
Greater Capital Region



Executive **Message**

2019



In 2019, LSNC marked its 63rd year providing critical legal services to tens of thousands of needy and vulnerable individuals, while engaging in complex and sophisticated legal work--through litigation, legislative and administrative advocacy, and community development--which had a significant positive impact for our clients' communities in the areas of affordable housing, public benefits, health, education, and civil rights. At the year's close, LSNC received a comprehensive report from our largest funder--the federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC)--which, after a week-long visit to our organization and a searching analysis of all aspects of our performance, included these comments in its superlative conclusion:

“Staff at every level are deeply committed to LSNC’s mission...”

“LSNC is a high quality legal services program with significant strengths across all performance area criteria. Staff at every level are deeply committed to LSNC’s mission, and all program operations and delivery mechanisms are strategically designed to effectuate its implementation...Community partners interviewed were uniform in their appreciation and unqualified support for the program and staff...Regardless of experience level or job position, program staff are uniformly

and deeply committed to the program’s mission and delivery system...Despite having many offices separated by vast geographic areas, [the LSC evaluators] were very impressed with the uniformity of program policy implementation, the shared sense of vision, and the collective dedication to the program’s mission evidenced by all staff.”


Gary F. Smith
Executive Director


Kevin Johnson
President of the Board

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Robert Joehnck,
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Becky Nylander,
Placer Independent Resource Center

Annette Smith,
Placer Independent Resource Center

SHASTA REGION MEMBERS

Devera Ayres,
Faith Works

Thomas Andrews,
California State Bar

Cheryl Watson,
People of Progress

Our Offices & Special Programs

OFFICES

LSNC Executive Office

517 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-551-2150

Sacramento County Office

515 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-551-2150

Solano County Office

1810 Capitol Street, Vallejo, CA 94590
707-643-0054

Yolo County Office

619 North Street, Woodland, CA 95695
530-662-1065

Ukiah Regional Office

421 North Oak Street, Ukiah, CA 95482
877-529-7700

Serving Lake and Mendocino counties.

Mother Lode Regional Office

190 Reamer Street, Auburn, CA 95603
530-823-7560

Serving Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, and Sierra counties.

Butte Regional Office

541 Normal Avenue, Chico, CA 95928
530-345-9491

Serving Butte, Colusa, Glenn, and Plumas counties.

Shasta Regional Office

1370 West Street, Redding, CA 96001
530-241-3565

Serving Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tehama counties.

Redwood Regional Office

123 Third Street, Eureka, CA 95501
707-445-0866

Serving Del Norte, Humboldt, and Trinity counties.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Senior Legal Hotline

505 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
800-222-1753

Voluntary Legal Services Program

501 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-551-2102

Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP)

505 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-376-8915
Information and counseling services for Medicare beneficiaries.

LSNC-Health

515 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
888-354-4474

Independent assistance for healthcare consumers. Serves our 23 counties and Alpine, Inyo, Mono, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Sutter, Ventura, and Yuba counties.

Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal Clinic at Loaves & Fishes

401 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95811
916-446-0368
Protecting the civil rights of the homeless. A collaboration with Loaves and Fishes.

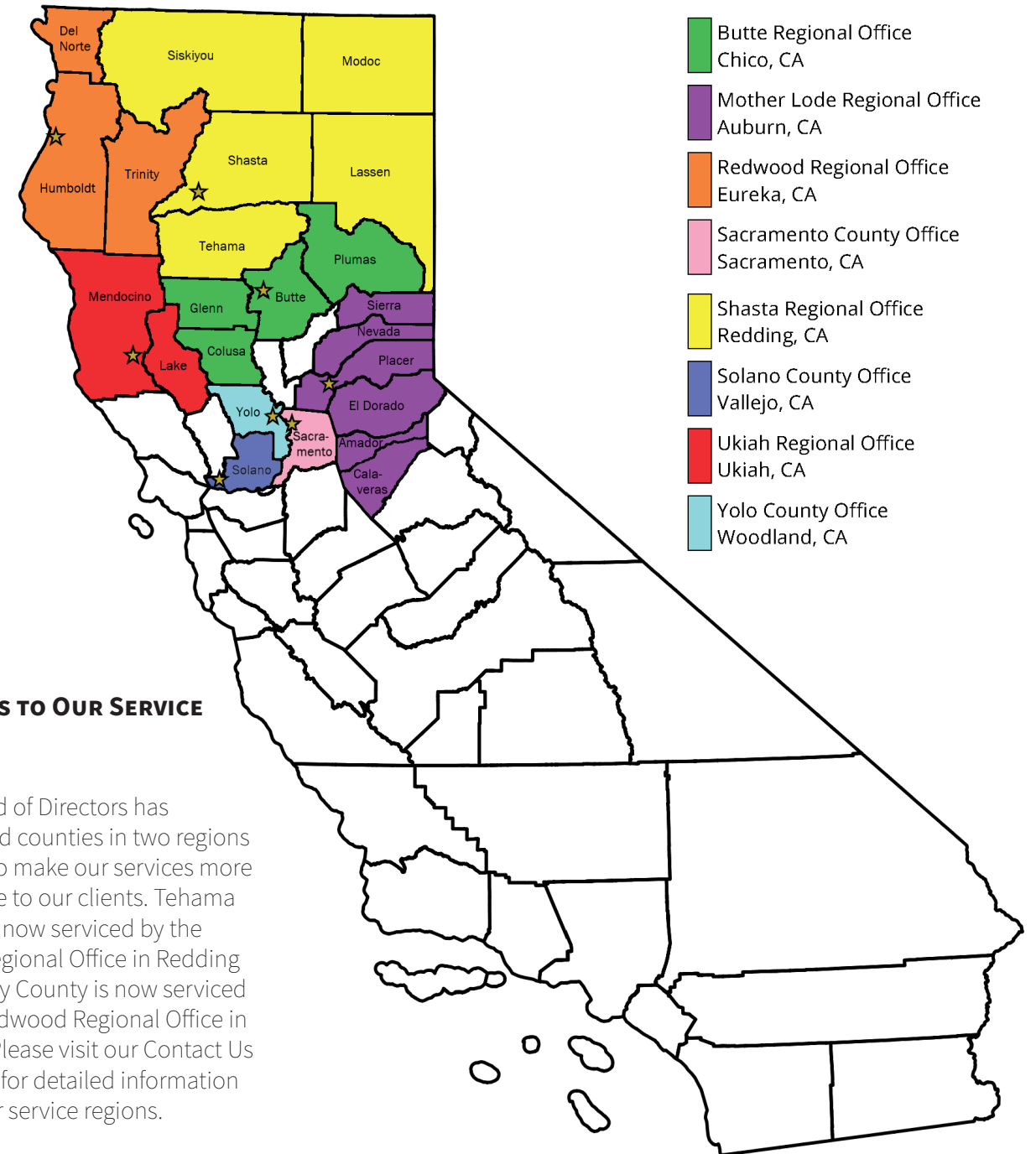
Western States Pension Assistance Program

505 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
866-413-4911

Free pension counseling to anyone, regardless of age or income, who live(d) or work(ed) in Arizona, California, Hawaii, and/or Nevada.

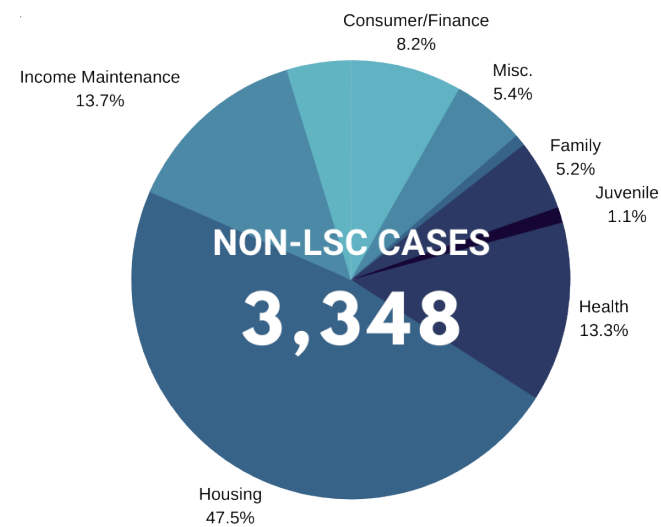
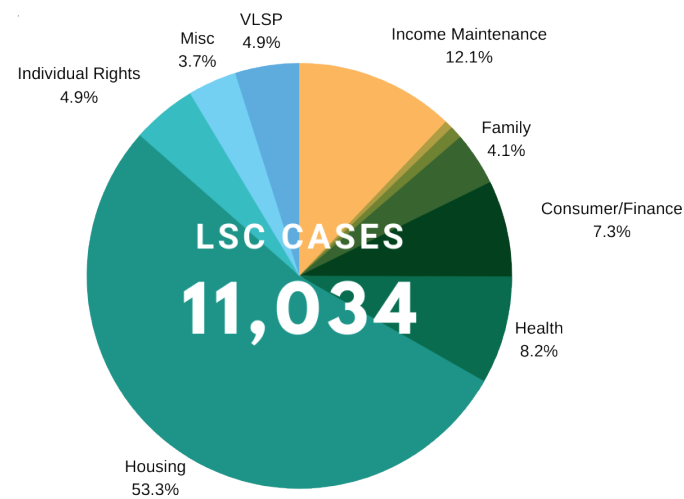
Expanded Access Project (EAP)

517 12th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-551-2194
After-hours legal assistance.



2019 Case Statistics

PRIORITY	LSC Cases ¹	Non-LSC Cases ²	Total Cases
Consumer/Finance	805	332	1,137
Education	70	13	83
Employment	105	13	118
Family	449	270	719
Juvenile	104	55	159
Health	905	931	1,836
Housing	5,876	698	6,574
Income Maintenance	1,333	566	1,899
Individual Rights	542	114	656
Miscellaneous	306	356	662
LSNC Totals	10,495	3,348	13,843
VLSP³ Totals	539	N/A	539
TOTAL CASES	11,034	3,348	14,382



¹Cases funded under our LSC field grant.
²Cases funded through sources other than our LSC grant.
³Voluntary Legal Services Program (VLSP) is a subsidiary organization of LSNC.

ANNUAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY



Single Person
\$15,950



Family of Four
\$32,750

Income eligibility thresholds are 125% of the 2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines set by the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services

SPECIAL POPULATIONS



7,409
cases involving seniors



1,627
cases involving veterans



1,112
cases involving domestic violence

LSNC'S OTHER SERVICES



3,185 Individuals provided one-on-one information at a court help desk



12,106 Individuals provided information in a group setting (i.e. clinics, workshops)

425

Legal education events focused on clients & community groups

112

Events focused on professionals, partner organizations, bar groups, etc.



Financials

2019

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Cash	\$ 530,580
Grants and contracts receivable	622,204
Other receivables	22,862
Prepaid expenses and deposits	321,914
Investments	1,976,264
Property and equipment	1,957,716

TOTAL ASSETS \$ 5,431,540

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$ 116,458
Accrued liabilities	671,729
Notes payable	351,649
Deferred revenue	1,174,632

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$ 2,314,468

NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	
Undesignated	\$ 697,341
Board designated - endowment	152,129
Board designated - self insurance	257,194
Undesignated fixed assets	697,766
With donor restrictions	1,312,642

TOTAL NET ASSETS \$ 3,117,072

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$ 5,431,540

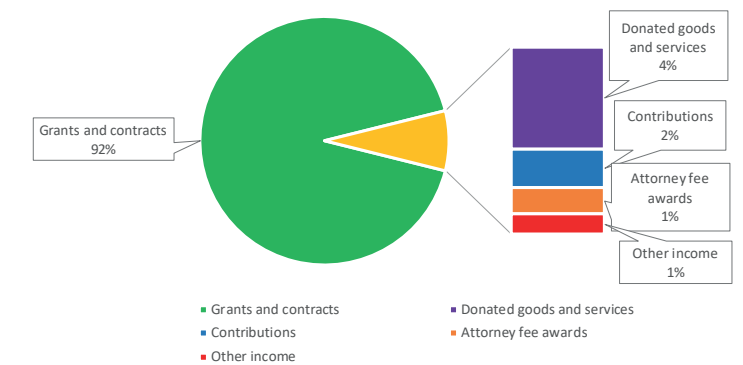
Statement of Activities

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

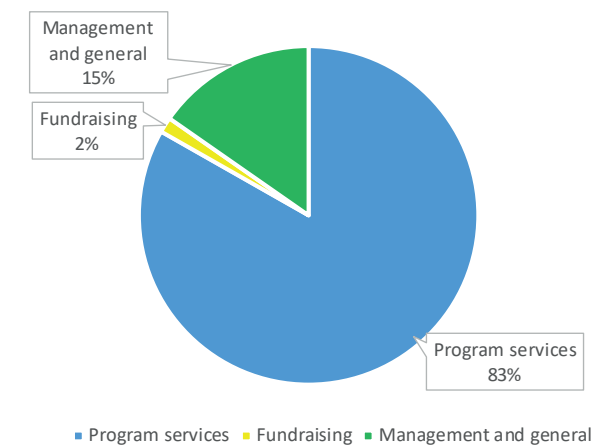
Grants and contracts	\$ 10,784,124
Donated goods and services	497,150
Contributions	187,768
Attorney fee awards	129,713
Other income	49,085
Interest income	29,829
Rental income	17,325
Net assets released	0

TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT \$11,694,994

REVENUE AND SUPPORT



EXPENSES



EXPENSES

Program services	\$ 9,915,831
Fundraising	174,844
Management and general	1,821,886

TOTAL EXPENSES \$11,912,561



2019

JUSTICE IN
ACTION

Housing Preservation

JUSTICE IN ACTION

6,574

housing preservation cases in 2019

In response to ever increasing rents and many evictions, the California State Legislature passed the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 in the fall of 2019. The law established anti-rent gouging protections and just cause protections against evictions for many California tenants. Until the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 took effect, tenants in the 23 counties that LSNC serves had no protections against rent increases and many faced drastic rent increases, which often led

to evictions and displacement. When the Act passed, Legal Services of Northern California immediately began educating its community partners and communities about the legal protections, and assisting tenants in asserting these new protections. The new law is an important tool in LSNC's work to preserve stable and affordable housing opportunities for our clients.

Helping Tenants



After the California Legislature passed the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 in September 2019, one of LSNC's field offices was contacted by a group of tenants who were being evicted from their long time homes. All of the tenants were people with disabilities or had a family member with disabilities, and some had lived in their homes for nearly 20 years. Two of the tenants were single moms, and some were seniors. They rented from the same management company and received notices telling them they must move out by December 31, 2019. The notices did not allege our clients violated their leases in any way and appeared designed to force the tenants out of their homes

before January 1, 2020 when each of the families would have just cause protection against eviction due to the new Tenant Protection Act. LSNC attorneys represented the group and were able to negotiate a rescission of all of the notices. As a result, each of these tenants remain in their long time homes and now have just cause protections against eviction for the first time.

Healthcare Access

LSNC advocates opened 1,836 new health cases for clients in 2019. These cases involved a broad range of health insurance systems, including Medi-Cal, Denti-Cal, Medicare, Covered California, and private employer insurance, as well as a broad range of issues, such as program eligibility and termination, Advance Premium Tax Credit reconciliation, denials of medically necessary care, medical debt, and access to services problems. One area of focus for LSNC over the past

few years has been access to transportation to medical appointments for Medi-Cal beneficiaries. This is a particularly important issue for LSNC's rural clients, who are often unable to access medical care, especially specialty medical care, without transportation assistance due to geographic distance and limited resources. In 2019, LSNC was successful in litigation against the state and one of its Medi-Cal health plans, which had denied transportation assistance to one of our rural clients who

was referred for specialty care 120 miles away from his home. The client had had to bear the transportation costs out-of-pocket, or forgo care when he could not afford to pay for transportation. The health plan was ordered to reimburse LSNC's client for past out-of-pocket transportation expenses and agreed to provide transportation assistance going forward. LSNC continues to monitor this issue to ensure that low-income Medi-Cal beneficiaries have meaningful access to medical care.

JUSTICE IN ACTION

1,836

healthcare access cases in 2019

Helping Joshua*



Joshua contacted LSNC for assistance because he was about to be turned over to collections for a medical bill for his infant son, who was enrolled in Medi-Cal with Anthem Blue Cross. The baby had gotten suddenly very ill while the family was out of town in southern California, forcing them to take the baby to the emergency room. Though the emergency room visit was fully covered, the family continued to receive bills from the pathology group that had run tests during the ER visit. The family had contacted the pathology group to explain that the baby was on Medi-Cal and had also filed a grievance with their Medi-Cal health plan. However, the pathology group continued to bill the family

and threatened to send them to collections, causing a lot of stress and anxiety. LSNC assisted the family by contacting the pathology group directly and following up with a formal letter outlining the group's illegal collection practices. The pathology group immediately pulled the bill from collections and set the family's amount owed balance to zero.

Economic Stability

Helping Carly*



We helped Carly* challenge her denial of Unemployment Insurance based on misconduct. The store Carly worked for alleged that she broke a company rule by buying an item on sale from the store because a family member bought an item from the store on sale for their use. Carly had not been told about a recent rule change regarding family members buying items from the store on sale. LSNC represented Carly in a hearing, and the judge ruled that a family member buying something for themselves did not violate the rule, and in any event Carly did not commit misconduct because she was not told about the rule.

In 2019 LSNC continued to achieve great results for clients in local and statewide public benefits advocacy. One example includes negotiating reforms to a county General Assistance Program that increased the number of people on the program from under 10 to 100+.

LSNC advocates represented clients in administrative hearings in a variety of public benefit programs, including CalWORKs, CalFresh, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), and

Supplemental Security Income (SSI), winning decisions that allowed our clients to get and keep the subsistence benefits they rely upon. Advocates also participated extensively in state program workgroups that proactively identify and resolve issues that arise in benefit programs, avoiding the need for time consuming appeals and litigation. Additionally, LSNC negotiated changes in county and state policies in several areas including CalWORKs welfare-to-work policies, CalWORKs eligibility, collection of CalFresh

overissuances, and supportive services for people participating in welfare-to-work. Overall, LSNC provided assistance in more than 1900 cases involving non health public benefits in 2019.

JUSTICE IN ACTION

3,154
economic stability cases in 2019

Guiding Tomorrow's Leaders



In 2019, Legal Services of Northern California's (LSNC) Summer Law Clerk Program ran from May 28 to August 2. The program welcomed thirteen law clerks and one California ChangeLawyers fellow representing six law schools from across the country. At the beginning of the summer, LSNC held a two-day skills training in Sacramento for all students. The training exposed students to the

major legal problems facing low-income families and highlighted the advocacy skills necessary to work in public interest law. Following orientation, the law clerks reported to their assigned offices in Auburn, Chico, Eureka, Redding, Sacramento, Ukiah, Vallejo, and Woodland, as well as LSNC-Health and the Western States Pension Assistance Project, both located in Sacramento. LSNC attorneys guided and supervised

the students as they engaged in client interviewing, drafting memos, working with community groups, and conducting legal research for cases and projects on various civil issues. The students received additional online and in-person training throughout the summer. LSNC is proud of its Summer Law Clerk Program and the quality law students who join each year!

Special **Projects**



Helping Janna*

SLH Client

Janna* is a senior who called LSNC after receiving notice that increased her rent more than 10 percent. Due to her low fixed income, Janna is a participant of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, meaning the local public housing authority (“PHA”) pays most of Janna’s rent to her landlord, and Janna pays the remainder. The PHA approved the landlord’s rent increase. A LSNC attorney advised Janna that the landlord’s rent increase violated the new California Tenant Protection Act of 2019, which prohibits many landlords from raising rent above a specified “cap” annually. The attorney sent a letter demanding the landlord and PHA to comply with the new law. In response, the landlord rescinded the notice, and increased Janna’s rent by a smaller, permissible amount. Janna remained in her home.

Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Project

LSNC’s Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Project (HICAP) serves nine counties and counseled more than 4,000 Medicare beneficiaries during 2019. HICAP’s 38 highly-trained volunteers and ten staff members provided advice on issues ranging from prescription drug plan selections to ambulance bill payment denials, providing services locally at senior centers and other service providers in our clients’ neighborhoods. In 2019, this resulted in savings of \$2,006,510 to Medicare beneficiaries.

Senior Legal Hotline (SLH)

In 2019, LSNC’s Senior Legal Hotline (SLH) provided legal aid to more than 600 older adult (ages 60+) households. SLH staff and volunteers conducted client interviews via telephone, in the office and during regular intake appointments at senior centers. For limited English proficient clients, LSNC used language interpretation services during intake. Advocates worked on cases involving preservation of housing, consumer law, estate planning, income maintenance, and elder abuse concerns. LSNC also provided community legal education to hundreds of seniors throughout northern California.

Western States Pensions Assistance Program

Since 2007, LSNC’s Western States Pensions Assistance Program has recovered more than \$27 million in retirement benefits for our clients –over \$2.7 million in 2019 alone. Project staff and volunteers provide critical legal advice and assistance to hundreds of clients each year, many of whom were unable to resolve their matters on their own, or find other legal assistance. The pension project prevents senior poverty by ensuring the availability, access and accuracy of hard-earned retirement benefits for employees, retirees, and surviving spouses.



Helping Leroy*

Pension Client

Leroy*, a veteran in his eighties with disabilities, wanted to find a pension he earned from employment decades ago. He contacted the employer, but was told that his department was sold to a new company. The new company told Leroy they did not have any records related to him. LSNC helped Leroy gather the necessary information to prove his work history and pension eligibility. The attorney submitted this information to both the new and original employer, since neither claimed responsibility for the benefit or any records of Leroy. After unsatisfactory responses, LSNC submitted a claim, demonstrating why Leroy was due a pension. The original employer agreed, and Leroy can now supplement his Social Security and Veterans Benefits with nearly \$400 per month in pension benefits. In addition, Leroy is nearly 20 years past normal retirement age, and is due a retroactive lump sum award for the late commencement of his vested benefit.

Expanded Access Project

To better reach those who cannot access LSNC services during regular business hours, the Expanded Access Project (EAP) offers nightly evening intake and expanded clinic services. EAP strives to reach those who work, go to school or have disabilities that prevent them from accessing services during LSNC’s traditional client intake hours. In 2019, EAP closed more than 300 cases and assisted more than 500 individuals through 76 clinics. LSNC continues to engage in outreach to inform its communities of these expanded services and anticipates increased demand as time goes on.

Shriver Project

In collaboration with Yolo County and the Yolo County Superior Court, LSNC has operated a Housing Court Pilot Project with Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act funding since February of 2012. The project provides full representation and a range of unbundled legal services to eligible litigants in unlawful detainer (eviction) cases. The project also offers self-help assistance and mediation provided at the courthouse by LSNC staff.



Our **Grantors**

2019

Thank you to our many grantors who, through their generosity and support, make our work possible.

AARP Foundation

Area 1 Agency on Aging

Area 2 Agency on Aging

Area 26 Agency on Aging

Area 28 Agency on Aging

Area 3 Agency on Aging

Area 4 Agency on Aging

Blue Shield

City of Marin

City of Redding

City of Vallejo

City of Woodland

County of Placer

County of Solano

County of Yolo

Covered California

Fair Housing Advocates of California

Judicial Council of California

Legal Services Corporation

NewBank

Placer Community Foundation

Solano/Contra Costa Office of the Ombudsman

State Bar of California Legal Services Trust Fund

Superior Court of California, County of Amador

Superior Court of California, County of El Dorado

Superior Court of California, County of Nevada

Superior Court of California, County of Placer

van Löben Sels/RembeRock Foundation

Yolo County Housing Authority

Thank **You**



Dear Friends,

Our fight against poverty is a fight against injustice. The work we do would not be possible without your time, talent, and treasure. Your generosity allows us to help the most vulnerable in our communities attain a better and more secure future. Thank you for supporting Legal Services of Northern California!

All our best,

Nanette Aubut
Development Director

Jenki Gomez
Pro Bono Coordinator



Donors

2019

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\$5,000 & More

DLA Piper Foundation

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Jay-Allen Eisen & Julia Couzens

Rama Sethi-Gulati

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Lewis Kassis Foundation

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Rothschild Wishek & Sands LLP

SMUD

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Rita Mize

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 Samuel D. Berns
 Sandusky Lynn Shelton & Michael Butler

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 Shelly Bromberg
 Stacey Wittorff
 Stan Bromley & Julia Bromley
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 Steven Van Horssen
 Susan Carey
 Susan D. Berg
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 Timothy E. Ainsworth & Karen Leaf
 Timothy A. Brisson
 Victor Pappalardo
 W. Herb Whitaker
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 William F. Bianco
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 Jeffrey Galvin & Terri Clark
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 Stephen Adams & Karen Turley Adams
 Wilbur Haines, III

Father Rodney Davis
 The Honorable Emily E. Vasquez & Ralph Lightstone
 The Honorable Rudolph Loncke & Lilly Spitz
 The Honorable Stephen L. Mock
 The Honorable Steven Rodda & Barbara Rodda
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 The Honorable Vance Raye & Sandra Raye

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 Less than \$100**

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 California Museum
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 Esquire Imax Theatre
 Forester Purcell Stowell PC
 Gunther's Ice Cream
 Laughs Unlimited
 Law Office of Ronald Britt
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Special Events 2019





PLACER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

September 2019
Auburn, CA



TRIVIA-BINGO & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

October 2019
Sacramento, CA





EUREKA PRO BONO GALA

October 2019
Eureka, CA



BUTTE REGIONAL OFFICE PRO BONO CELEBRATION

November 2019
Chico, CA



LEGAL SERVICES
of
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