

# THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

ILLINOIS EQUAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

## Illinois Equal Justice Foundation Board Members

Foundation board members represent organizations from throughout the state, and are appointed by the Illinois State Bar Association and the Chicago Bar Association to ensure the equitable distribution of the state appropriation for civil legal aid.

Fiscal Year 2007 Board  
July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Victor P. Henderson  
*President*



Leslie Corbett  
*Executive Director*

Navigating our state's civil legal system can be a daunting task. For low-income Illinoisans who do not have access to legal aid, it is almost impossible. The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation (IEJF) was created to help address this challenge, and last year was no exception.

An increase in funding - from \$2 million to \$3.5 million - passed by the Illinois General Assembly resulted in the allocation of 51 grants to 27 legal aid organizations. As a result, IEJF funded seven new nonprofit groups and helped open seven court-based self-help centers around the state.

But despite last year's successes, the need to help our society's most vulnerable citizens - children, low-income families and elderly Illinoisans - remains considerable. Of the ten most populous states, Illinois ranks near the bottom in the amount it spends on civil legal aid. The situation is especially dire in Central and Southern Illinois, where fewer than 100 attorneys serve more than 400,000 low-income people.

Unlike in criminal cases, those who face civil legal problems, such as domestic violence, unlawful evictions and predatory lending, do not automatically have the right to counsel. Such was the case for Will County resident Sally, who suffers from brain damage as a result of abuse by her husband of 20 years. She could not afford an attorney to obtain an order of protection and, eventually a divorce, so a concerned family member sought help from the Will County Legal Assistance Program. Although Sally will never be the same, she is now safe and happy to be living independently.

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation was established to help low-income residents like Sally gain access to justice. In 1999, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Illinois Equal Justice Act, which created the Foundation to distribute funding to support nonprofit legal aid programs.

In the following pages, the numbers speak for themselves. They demonstrate the desperate need for civil legal aid and the ability of grantee organizations to use state funds to reach vulnerable seniors and low-income families across Illinois. Please see pages 10 through 13 for a list of grant recipients, all committed to helping our state's low-income residents enjoy the fundamental right to equal justice.

Victor P. Henderson  
President, FY 2007

Leslie Corbett  
Executive Director



## BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

# 118,000

THE NUMBER OF LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS WHO RECEIVED LEGAL INFORMATION, ADVICE, MEDIATION AND REPRESENTATION AS A RESULT OF IEJF FUNDS.

Through the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, more than 100,000 people benefited last year from a variety of legal aid services, including telephone advice, mediation and representation. The breadth of organizations providing assistance is impressive, including those that serve the deaf, immigrant communities and people with disabilities.

But while dozens of diverse organizations exist throughout the state to serve those in need, the Foundation has also responded to the increasing number of people who are forced by a lack of resources to represent themselves - known as pro se litigants.

In fiscal year 2007, seven courthouse-based self-help centers opened throughout the state of Illinois due to funding from IEJF. These centers provide access to print and Internet materials as well as professional staff members who assist pro se litigants with navigating web-based services.

Many judges have experienced firsthand the benefit of these centers. The courts are overwhelmed with the number of pro se litigants who are not prepared to represent themselves, they say, and self-help centers help litigants maneuver through the complex legal system without making additional trips to court.

Centers in the 11th and 2nd Circuit courts, and Kane, Winnebago, Madison, Kankakee and Macon counties, are ensuring that residents can take control of their lives by equipping them with the legal resources they need, while increasing the efficiency of the court system.

“MANY JUDGES HAVE EXPERIENCED FIRSTHAND THE BENEFIT OF SELF-HELP CENTERS.”



## DOWNSTATE SHORTAGE

# 84

THE NUMBER OF LEGAL AID ATTORNEYS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO MORE THAN 400,000 LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS IN CENTRAL AND DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS.

Nearly 300 lawyers in Illinois have dedicated their careers to serving those who cannot afford counsel in civil legal cases. But the need for lawyers and resources across the state is staggering, particularly in Central and Southern Illinois. Only 84 legal aid attorneys provide assistance to more than 400,000 low-income central and downstate residents in 101 counties, according to *The Legal Aid Safety Net: A Report on the Legal Needs of Low-Income Illinoisans* published in 2005.

There are countless stories of central and downstate residents whose lives have been changed through access to legal aid. Consider the story of Charley and Betty, both in their 60s, who were victims of a predatory lending scheme. They live in a modest home in Southern Illinois that they had bought and paid for in better times. In 2003, they were approached by a door-to-door salesman who promised to replace the siding and windows in their home for a payment of less than \$200 a month. In fact, the payments were more than \$300, far in excess of what they could afford. Within a year, their home was in foreclosure. Charley and Betty turned to the Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, which stopped the foreclosure and allowed the couple to stay in the place they have called home for 30 years.

Not everyone is as lucky as Charley and Betty. Often, downstate residents have nowhere to turn when faced with similar legal matters. With this in mind, IEJF has dedicated considerable resources to legal aid hotlines as a first point of contact, particularly for the rural poor. More than 25 percent of IEJF grants went to legal aid hotlines around the state last year. Telephone advice and referral services provide a considerable number of residents with free legal advice, general information on how to use the legal system and referrals to appropriate legal aid organizations.

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## STRETCHED TOO THIN

Although state funding has increased, the legal aid system in Illinois continues to operate in crisis mode. Of the ten most populous states, the average appropriation for legal aid is \$9.7 million. Illinois spends a little more than one third of that, ranking 9th among those states in the amount it allocates to civil legal aid groups.

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation is fortunate to have the support of Attorney General Lisa Madigan, several state legislators and Equal Justice Illinois Campaign co-chairs Philip J. Rock, former Illinois Senate President, and James R. Thompson, former Governor of Illinois - all of whom are leading the fight for increased state funding. They believe that an increase will benefit the state over the long term, reducing the need for costly government services and increasing the efficiency of our courts. In fact, an increase in the state appropriation to \$5 million will enable legal aid organizations to help an additional 20,000 Illinois families in crisis.

The result of inadequate funding for legal aid is a two-tiered system of justice, in which some can afford representation and many others are shut out of the process entirely. Illinois must do its share, in partnership with the federal government, private organizations and the legal community, to ensure that no one is denied access to justice.



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ONE LEGAL AID LAWYER CAN  
MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Just one lawyer can make the difference between living with an abusive person or living in a safe home, losing a home due to fraud or remaining financially secure.

Consider the case of two teenage girls whose maternal grandmother served as their guardian. The grandmother moved the family in with an abusive boyfriend and held on to the girls' public aid benefits, refusing to turn over their medical cards even when one of them had a severe asthma attack. A legal aid lawyer helped move the girls in with an aunt, who now serves as their guardian.

Or consider the case of Ginger, an 83-year-old widow suffering from lung cancer. Her own daughter took advantage of her ailing condition and intimidated her into signing mortgage documents that legally bound her to pay for her daughter's house. Ginger sought the help of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago, which also discovered that the daughter had stolen thousands of dollars from Ginger's savings account and charged tens of thousands on her credit cards. Thanks to legal aid, Ginger was cleared of all debt incurred in her name.

Legal aid lawyers are often the only lifeline to families, children and the elderly in need. And all it takes is one lawyer to truly make the difference in people's lives.

"I thought that I was just doomed," said one domestic violence victim who turned to legal aid to obtain a divorce. "It was like a door opened. To me, they didn't have to say it, but it was like 'We're going to protect you.' And they did."

“

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## IEJF 2007 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The IEJF grant budget for fiscal year 2007 was \$3,325,000. Over the course of the year, the IEJF was able to award an additional \$30,000 in grants due to investment income. The grant total as of June 30, 2007 was \$3,355,000.

### **CABRINI GREEN LEGAL AID CLINIC CHICAGO**

To assist hundreds of low-income people with their family law problems (\$30,000);

To assist individuals wishing to expunge arrest records and/or seal non-violent, misdemeanor convictions in order to obtain employment and economic self-sufficiency (\$30,000).

### **CASA AZTLAN CHICAGO**

To establish the Aztlan Legal Information Center to serve the civil legal information needs of the low-income Latino community in Pilsen (\$30,000).

### **CATHOLIC CHARITIES CHICAGO**

To expand the Legal Assistance and Resource Center's telephone legal advice and referral service for low-income people with civil legal issues (\$10,000).

### **CENTER FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION CHICAGO**

To assist thousands of people throughout Cook County in resolving a wide array of disputes through mediation (\$135,000);

To plan, in partnership with the Center for Analysis of Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems, a statewide initiative for the development of mediation programs outside of Cook County that serve the needs of low-income residents (\$7,500).

### **CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS CHICAGO**

To provide outreach and legal information on education rights to homeless parents, youth and children (\$15,000).

### **CHICAGO LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW, INC. CHICAGO**

To support pro se guidance in employment discrimination settlement conferences via the Settlement Appointment Program in federal court (\$30,000).

### **CHICAGO LEGAL CLINIC CHICAGO**

To provide education, resources and referrals for Cook County residents faced with foreclosure proceedings at an Advice Desk in the Cook County Circuit Court (\$69,150);

To provide legal representation on family law matters to Latina victims of domestic violence in the South Chicago community (\$25,000).

### **CHICAGO VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES CHICAGO**

To protect hundreds of children by serving as Guardian Ad Litem in Cook County probate guardianship cases (\$50,000);

To support the Access to Justice Program in its appointed representation of low-income families facing foreclosure, subsidized housing eviction and other Chancery Court matters at the Richard J. Daley Center (\$50,000).

### **COORDINATED ADVICE & REFERRAL PROGRAM FOR LEGAL SERVICES CHICAGO**

To help thousands of low-income people in Cook County by providing legal advice, self-help materials, guidance on how to use the court system and referrals through a telephone hotline (\$263,500);

To assist unrepresented parties with advice, information and form preparation at the Domestic Relations Self-Help Desk (\$35,000) and at the Collections Self-Help Desk (\$35,000) in the Cook County Circuit Court.

### **DEPAUL COLLEGE OF LAW ASYLUM & IMMIGRATION CLINIC CHICAGO**

To support the Legal Resources Project For Immigrant Services Providers plans to identify the most effective means of delivering legal information to low-income immigrants and refugees through its network of local community-based organization partners (\$10,000).

### **EQUIP FOR EQUALITY CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND, CARBONDALE & SPRINGFIELD**

To provide legal information on the American with Disabilities Act, special education and guardianship to people with disabilities across the state through the Training Institute (\$65,000);

To provide legal advice, information and referrals on Special Education legal issues via a telephone helpline (\$70,000).

### **ILLINOIS COALITION FOR EQUAL JUSTICE DOWNSTATE**

To support the convening of a conference dedicated to diversifying pro bono options in downstate communities with the goal of increasing pro bono participation and client service in those regions (\$1,500).

### **ILLINOIS LEGAL AID ONLINE STATEWIDE**

To support a Statewide Virtual Self-Help Center that provides Illinois residents with user-friendly online legal resources and interactive forms to help them better resolve their legal problems and which coordinates, supports and provides technical assistance to self-help and legal information projects across the state (\$204,250).

### **IMMIGRATION PROJECT GRANITE CITY**

To support monthly legal information and advice clinics in nine downstate communities with large immigration populations (\$50,000).

### **KANKAKEE CENTER FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION OF THE VICTIMS ASSISTANCE CENTER KANKAKEE**

To assist people throughout Kankakee County in resolving a wide array of disputes through mediation (\$37,500).

### **LAND OF LINCOLN LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION ALTON, CHAMPAIGN, EAST ST. LOUIS, CARBONDALE & SPRINGFIELD**

To serve thousands of low-income people in 65 counties in central and southern Illinois by providing legal advice, self-help materials, guidance on how to use the court system and referrals through a telephone hotline (\$263,000);

To help elderly people in 25 counties in central and southern Illinois by providing legal assistance for elder abuse and neglect, guardianship, health and long-term care issues and consumer matters through senior centers, nursing homes and home visits (\$50,000);

To provide low-income people in 65 counties with representation on family and housing law cases (\$370,000);

To provide information and assistance to low-income people with landlord/tenant issues in Madison, Morgan and Sangamon County Circuit Courts and to provide instruction on divorce to self-represented litigants in the southern and eastern regions of the state (\$9,000); and

To coordinate legal information centers in the Madison and Sangamon County Circuit Courts and to develop similar centers in Macon & Jefferson County (\$60,000).

## IEJF 2007 GRANT RECIPIENTS (CONTINUED)

### LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR BETTER HOUSING CHICAGO

To support a Pro Bono Coordinator and a Legal Assistant position to increase and improve pro bono representation of low-income defendants facing eviction and other housing matters (\$17,000).

### LEGAL AID BUREAU OF METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICES CHICAGO

To protect and support families on the south side of Chicago in which grandparents are assuming full-time parenting roles and to protect seniors abused by guardians and caregivers (\$58,000);

To support an attorney position to provide legal advice, information and representation on housing and consumer issues to low-income people served by the Calumet and Midway service offices (\$32,000).

### LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO CHICAGO

To support the Pro Se Divorce Clinic, a series of classes taught in English and Spanish to guide low-income people to represent themselves in uncontested divorces (\$17,500);

To support a bilingual domestic violence/family law attorney in the Northwest Chicago Office to focus on the needs of Latina immigrant families (\$30,000);

To protect elderly people throughout Cook County against consumer fraud by providing information and legal assistance (\$55,000);

To help low-income families with housing legal issues in the south suburbs (\$45,000);

To help victims of domestic violence in 22 western Cook County suburbs by providing information, advice and legal assistance (\$45,000);

To provide legal assistance on family and housing issues to families in the north and northwest suburbs of Cook County (\$33,500);

To provide legal representation for public housing tenants affected by the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation (\$45,000); and

To provide legal services to families victimized by rescue fraud via the Home Ownership Preservation Project (\$55,000).

### LIFE SPAN CENTER FOR LEGAL SERVICES CHICAGO

To provide domestic violence and family law assistance to battered immigrant women in Jefferson Park (\$50,000).

### MIDWEST CENTER FOR LAW AND THE DEAF STATEWIDE

To produce video/web-friendly content in American Sign Language to help deaf and hard of hearing people use the court system more effectively (\$15,000).

### NATIONAL IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER CHICAGO, BERWYN & WAUKEGAN

To educate immigrants on consumer and immigration issues in partnership with Instituto del Progreso Latino (\$50,000).

### PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES CAROL STREAM, WAUKEGAN, GALESBURG, PEORIA, OTTAWA, BATAVIA & ST. CHARLES

To serve thousands of low-income people in 35 counties in northern and central Illinois by providing legal advice, self-help materials, guidance on how to use the court system and referrals through a telephone hotline (\$264,000);

To provide representation to victims of domestic violence and families in crisis, families with housing emergencies, victims of consumer fraud and senior citizens in northern and western Illinois (\$325,000); and

To assist in the development of Legal Information Centers in courthouses in Kankakee, McLean and Winnebago counties (\$63,300).

### PRO BONO CENTER FOR DISABILITY AND ELDER LAW CHICAGO

To support Pro Bono Coordinator positions to provide legal services to elderly people in Chicago (\$30,000).

### SARGENT SHRIVER NATIONAL CENTER ON POVERTY LAW STATEWIDE

To educate domestic violence survivors, social service providers and landlords on the provisions of the Illinois Safe Homes Act, which takes effect January 2007 (\$30,000).

### SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW FOUNDATION CARBONDALE

To help low-income families and children resolve custody and visitation issues by providing mediation services through its Alternative Dispute Resolution Clinic in nine counties in the First Judicial Circuit (\$21,750);

To serve thousands of people in southern Illinois by providing access to legal information by mail, via the internet and a community outpost (\$16,350); and

To educate immigrants on their legal rights via a program at the Ullin Tri-County Detention Center and via naturalization classes in the Carbondale community (\$1,200).

### WILL COUNTY LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM JOLIET

To support victims of domestic violence in Will County by providing comprehensive legal services to facilitate permanent escape from abuse (\$25,000);

To provide representation to families in housing crisis and to low-income people impacted by consumer fraud (\$25,000).





# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As of June 30, 2007

### ASSETS

#### Current Assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 114,013
Accounts receivable	104
Prepaid expenses	5,587
Total current assets	<u>119,704</u>

Property and equipment, net 2,491

Total Assets \$ 122,195

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities - grants payable \$ 6,188

#### Net Assets:

Unrestricted	94,475
Temporarily restricted	21,532
Total net assets	<u>116,007</u>

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$ 122,195

# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES For the Year Ended June 30, 2007

	<u>UNRESTRICTED</u>	<u>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE</u>			
Illinois funding	—	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 3,500,000
Donated services	15,000	—	15,000
Donated meeting space	1,241	—	1,241
Interest income	2,394	35,007	37,401
Net assets released from restrictions satisfaction of program restriction	3,513,475	(3,513,475)	—
Total public support and revenue	<u>3,532,110</u>	<u>21,532</u>	<u>3,553,642</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Program services	3,439,197	—	3,439,197
Management and general	103,356	—	103,356
Fundraising	8,925	—	8,925
Total expenses	<u>3,551,478</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>3,551,478</u>
Change in net assets	(19,368)	21,532	2,164
Net assets, beginning of year	113,843	—	113,843
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 94,475</u>	<u>\$ 21,532</u>	<u>\$ 116,007</u>

## STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2007

	PROGRAM SERVICES	MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL	FUNDRAISING	TOTAL
<u>FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</u>				
Salaries	\$ 52,269	\$ 24,124	\$ 4,021	\$ 80,414
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	9,013	4,160	693	13,866
Total salaries, taxes and fringe benefits	61,282	28,284	4,714	94,280
Grants awarded	3,355,000	—	—	3,355,000
Professional fees and consulting	7,272	53,934	2,798	64,004
Printing	—	5,319	—	5,319
Office expense	1,275	3,205	307	4,787
Telephone	2,035	870	159	3,064
Occupancy	8,125	3,750	625	12,500
Insurance	—	2,047	—	2,047
Equipment lease	—	545	—	545
Travel	2,264	1,782	116	4,162
Meetings	1,098	1,917	149	3,164
Fees and dues	100	1,359	—	1,459
Depreciation	746	344	57	1,147
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 3,439,197</b>	<b>\$ 103,356</b>	<b>\$ 8,925</b>	<b>\$ 3,551,478</b>

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2007

### CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:

Cash received - Illinois funding	\$ 3,500,000
Cash received - interest income	37,401
Payments grants awarded	(4,262,150)
Payments for wages and other operating activities	(176,815)
Net cash used by operating activities	<u>(901,564)</u>

### CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:

Purchases of property and equipment	(1,591)
Net cash used by investing activities	<u>(1,591)</u>

Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(903,155)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	1,017,168
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<u>\$ 114,013</u>

### RECONCILIATION OF CHANGE IN NET ASSETS TO NET CASH USED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES:

Change in net assets	\$ 2,164
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used by operating activities:	
Depreciation	1,147
Increase in accounts receivable	(104)
Increase in prepaid expenses	(3,452)
Decrease in grants payable	(907,150)
Increase in accounts payable	5,831
Net cash used by operating activities	<u>\$ (901,564)</u>



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As of January 2008,  
IEJF will be located at:  
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180 N. Stetson, Suite 820  
Chicago, IL 60601

[www.iejf.org](http://www.iejf.org)