We pledge...

and **justice** for all.

Illinois Equal Justice Foundation
2008 Annual Report

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Executive Director

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation (IEJF), a 501 c 3 tax exempt organization, distributes funding appropriated by the State to support not-for-profit legal aid programs. The funding for the IEJF, which comes through an appropriation through the Office of the Attorney General, directly helps families in crisis, victims of domestic violence and seniors facing abuse and financial exploitation. The IEJF supports innovative, cost-effective legal aid programs that empower clients to resolve legal issues and regain control of their lives. These programs offer information, guidance, advice, representation and tools to help clients understand the legal system and their rights within it.

"Equal justice is an integral part of the general welfare" [30 ILCS 765/5(g)]

We pledge... commitment

message from the President and Executive Director

Christine M. Ory
President

The number of people in Illinois living in extreme poverty is increasing. For the more than 685,000 people in our state struggling to make ends meet on an annual income of less than $20,000 for a family of four, a legal problem can spell disaster.

Individuals and families who can barely afford food, shelter and other necessities simply do not have the money to pay for the services of a lawyer when they are confronted by an abusive spouse demanding custody, an illegal eviction, or the denial of special education services for a child with a learning disability.

For those who cannot afford to hire a lawyer, the legal aid system provides a critical safety net. Not-for-profit legal aid organizations help low-income families, seniors, children with disabilities and veterans meet their basic human needs, including shelter, safety, economic stability and education. In fact, a major study by economists at Colgate University and the University of Arkansas found that legal aid is the only public service that decreases domestic violence in the long term.

With the passage of the Illinois Equal Justice Act in 1999, the state of Illinois recognized that "equal justice is an integral part of the general welfare" [30 ILCS 765/5(g)]. The Act established a state appropriation for civil legal aid and created the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation to distribute state funds to legal aid groups throughout the state.

Leslie Corbett
Executive Director

Legal solutions, like legal problems, vary in their scope and complexity. Therefore, the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation supports a range of services, from web-based legal information and telephone advice to mediation and full-scale litigation. Legal aid programs also partner with county courthouses, public libraries and community-based social service organizations to offer help where and when people need it, and to develop solutions to life problems, not just legal problems.

Last year the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation awarded $3,362,532 in grants to 23 not-for-profit organizations. These programs served the critical legal needs of 68,291 people and provided web-based legal information resources that were accessed more than 400,000 times.

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation is grateful that its funding held steady at $3.5 million in 2008. However, this figure still pales in comparison to the average of $10.6 million spent on civil legal aid by the ten most populous states. Illinois ranks ninth out of these states in spending on these vital services.

In the following pages you will meet four people who avoided disaster with the help of legal aid programs funded by the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation. Please see pages 12-14 for a list of the grant recipients working to increase access to justice for our state's low-income residents.

Christine M. Ory
President, FY 2008

Leslie Corbett
Executive Director

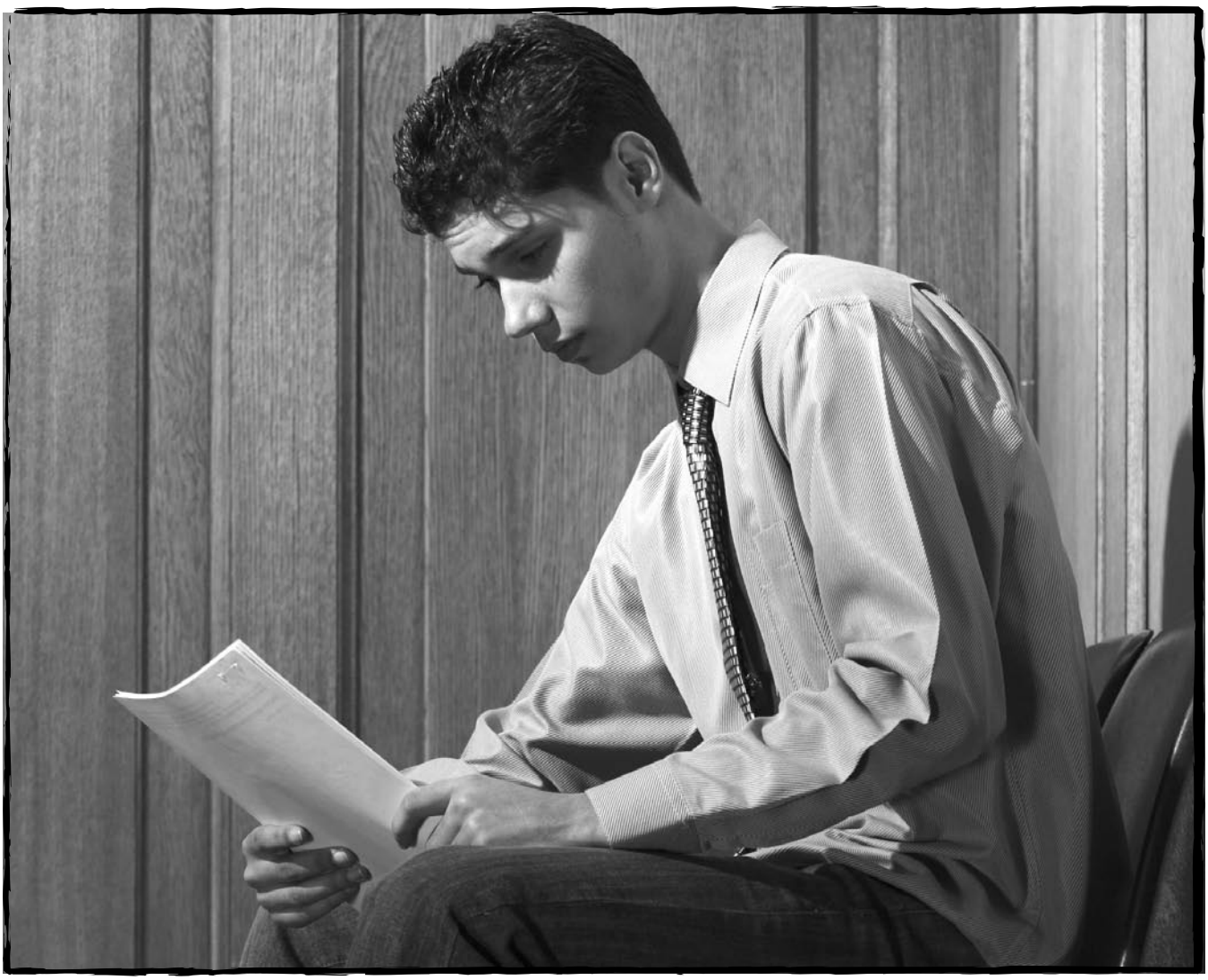
Equip for Equality

Special Education Helpline

The father of James, an 18-year-old high school student diagnosed with autism and bipolar syndromes, called Equip for Equality's *Special Education Helpline* seeking assistance at his son's upcoming Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting. At this meeting, the school's representatives planned to discuss moving James to a therapeutic day school in light of recent behavioral incidents. Both James and his father believed that his neighborhood school was the appropriate setting for him and wanted to ensure that he finish his last semester of high school there. Equip for Equality provided self-advocacy assistance and written materials to help James' father prepare how to most effectively advocate for his son at the meeting. The meeting was a success and James was allowed to remain in his neighborhood school. James' father also successfully advocated to revise a component of his son's IEP and increase the level of support that he would receive to ensure his success at the neighborhood school. James' father remarked, "I was so proud about what I did at that meeting." This case is significant because Illinois lags behind most other states in compliance with federal requirements to include children with special education needs in their neighborhood school to the greatest extent possible.

fact:

Though state funding has made impressive gains over the past three years, Illinois still ranks ninth out of the ten most populous states in what it spends on legal aid. The average amount spent on these critical services is $10.6 million, while Illinois spends $3.5 million.



We pledge...

opportunity for all.

The mission of Equip for Equality is to advance the human and civil rights of children and adults with physical and mental disabilities in Illinois. It is the only statewide, cross-disability, comprehensive advocacy organization providing self-advocacy assistance, legal services, and disability rights education while also engaging in public policy and legislative advocacy and conducting abuse investigations and other oversight activities.

Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc.

Civil Legal Assistance to Families in Crisis – Housing

Martha is a 57-year-old homeowner who lives with and cares for her 15-year-old grandson. She purchased her home in 1974 and paid her mortgage faithfully until she suffered a back injury in 2005 and was no longer able to work. She applied for Social Security Disability (SSD) but had trouble receiving her initial payments. Because of her reduced income and the waiting period to receive her SSD payments, Martha fell behind on her mortgage payments but was able to catch up with the help of her family. Still unable to work and struggling to make ends meet on her reduced income while caring for her grandson, she fell behind on her mortgage payments again in the fall of 2007. She then applied for a loan modification, but her mortgage company told her that she did not qualify and foreclosed on her home. Martha contacted Land of Lincoln and they worked on her budget with her. Land of Lincoln then contacted her mortgage company with her new budget and was able to negotiate a forbearance agreement. Her mortgage company agreed to re-amortize her loan and dismiss the foreclosure if Martha continues to make her monthly payments.

fact:

In 2008, Illinois Equal Justice Foundation awarded $3,362,532 in grants to 23 not-for-profit organizations. These programs served the critical civil legal needs of 68,291 low-income people. These funds also provided web-based legal information resources that were accessed more than 400,000 times.

We pledge...

to create stable communities.

Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc. provides free civil legal services to low-income persons and senior citizens in 65 counties in central and southern Illinois. Land of Lincoln's mission is to pursue civil justice for low-income persons through representation and education.

Life Span

Civil Legal Assistance to Families in Crisis – Domestic Violence

Evelena, who came to this country from Poland, lived for years with her citizen husband despite his frequent beatings. Evelena had developed a relationship with her husband Jim while he was working in Poland, and came to the United States to marry him when he was transferred back to Chicago. Once they lived here, Jim repeatedly promised to file immigration papers for Evelena, but he kept putting it off. Once Evelena got pregnant, Jim started hitting her. When their child was born, Jim told Evelena that she must obey him or he would have her deported. Jim told her that if she tried to leave him he would prevent her from taking their baby with her. Evelena, who spoke only Polish and had no friends or family in Chicago, felt that she was at Jim's mercy. When Evelena became pregnant again, Jim pushed her down the stairs causing her to suffer a miscarriage. Although terrified that she would be forced to return to Poland and leave her daughter behind, Evelena sought help at Life Span.

The bilingual Life Span legal staff filed an Order of Protection case for Evelena, providing her protection from Jim's abuse, temporary custody of their daughter and sole occupancy of their house. Additionally, Evelena qualified for protections under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) so Life Span began the filing process. Life Span will represent Evelena in any immigration proceedings. These legal interventions gave Evelena the freedom to end her relationship with Jim, knowing that she and her daughter could stay in the United States legally.

fact:

Extreme poverty in Illinois has increased while state funding for legal aid has remained level at $3.5 million. Over 685,000 people in our state struggle to survive on less than $20,000 a year (for a familiy of four). A legal problem can send these families into a downward spiral. In these situations, legal aid can mean the difference between shelter and homelessness; safety and violence; sustenance and hunger; economic stability and despair.

We pledge...

liberty for all.

Life Span describes itself as a domestic violence agency that also provides legal services. Life Span provides a comprehensive approach to addressing domestic violence with services that encompass a full range of solutions: counseling for clients and their children; criminal court advocacy; civil representation in family law matters; and representation in immigration cases. Life Span serves the needs of domestic violence survivors in Cook County.

Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago

Veterans Rights Project

Shelley cancelled her auto insurance around the time that she was deployed to Iraq in August 2005. Apparently there was one more payment due and, since she was in Iraq, she was not aware of it until she returned in April 2006. She then paid it, but the overdue payment had already gone to collection and, even when paid, went on her credit report as a late payment. When Shelley tried to purchase a house, she found that the late payment was listed on her credit report and lowered her credit rating by 60 points, leaving her one point short of obtaining a loan. She contacted the insurance company to discuss the problem, but was unable to resolve the matter. After she contacted the Legal Assistance Foundation, a paralegal from the *Veterans Rights Project* (VRP) called the insurance company and brought to their attention that the client was protected by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, which affords certain protections in credit and civil matters to deployed service members. After speaking to several employees of the insurance company, they told VRP's para-legal that Shelley's only recourse was to plead her case to the credit reporting agency. However, Shelley received a call from the insurance company the very next day. They apologized for their insensitivity and told her that they would have the late payment removed from her report immediately if she sent them a copy of her activation papers.

fact:

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation funds programs that provide protection from domestic violence, elder abuse, mortgage foreclosure, homelessness, consumer fraud and predatory lending.

We pledge...

to make an impact.

The Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago works to provide high-quality civil legal services to low-income and disadvantaged people and communities. Through advocacy, education, collaboration and litigation, the Legal Assistance Foundation strives to empower individuals, protect fundamental rights, strengthen communities, create opportunities and achieve justice.

We pledge...

advocacy

Champion of Justice

State Representative Patricia Reid Lindner

In April 2008, the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation and the Equal Justice Illinois Campaign, the bi-partisan effort to increase the state appropriation for civil legal aid, honored State Representative Patricia Reid Lindner (R, 50th) with its Champion of Justice Award.

Elected to the State House in 1992, Representative Lindner has demonstrated a deep commitment to the principle of "equal protection under the law" throughout her distinguished career. She has made protecting the legal rights of Illinois families a cornerstone of her legislative agenda. She was an original sponsor of the Illinois Equal Justice Act [30 ILCS 765/ (1999)] and serves as an active member of the Equal Justice Illinois Campaign's Blue Ribbon Committee.

As Assistant Minority Leader and former co-chair of the Council of Women Legislators (COWL), Representative Lindner has been an advocate for protecting the legal rights of low-income women and children. Her work with COWL raised awareness of the need for legal assistance in securing safety and stability to women in precarious situations.

Representative Lindner is retiring at the end of the current legislative session. She has been a trusted advisor in our work and will be missed.

fact:

Illinois is fortunate to have the bi-partisan support of Attorney General Lisa Madigan, several state legislators, civic and community leaders and Equal Justice Illinois Campaign co-chairs Philip J. Rock, former Senate President and James R. Thompson, former Governor of Illinois–all of whom are leading the fight to increase 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.

We pledge...

Illinois Equal Justice Foundation Funding Categories

access to justice

Legal Information for the Public

To provide basic legal information to members of the public with civil legal needs via the internet, libraries, community centers and courthouse-based information desks.

Self-Help Legal Assistance Projects

To provide Illinoisans using the court system with legal advice and *pro se* guidance to help them effectively navigate the legal system.

Mediation Services

To provide mediation services to Illinois residents involved in civil legal disputes.

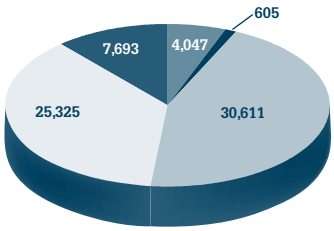
Telephone Advice & Referral Services

To offer legal information, advice and referral to callers through legal aid "hotlines".

Civil Legal Assistance

To support the salaries of staff attorneys and/or paralegals providing direct legal services in family, housing, consumer, disability and veterans benefits cases to low-income individuals and families.

Number Served by Category

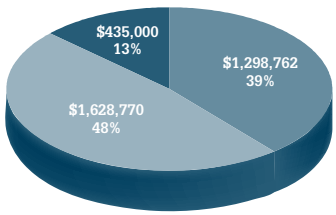


- Civil Legal Assistance
- Mediation Services
- Telephone Advice & Referral Services
- Legal Information for the Public*
- Self-Help Legal Assistance Projects

TOTAL: 68,291

*Web-based legal information resources received 413,246 hits.

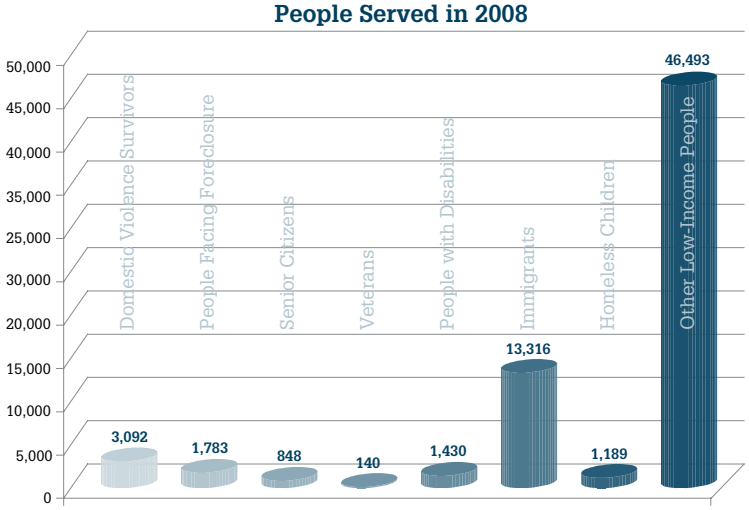
Funding by Region



- Chicago/Cook County
- Downstate
- Statewide Organizations

TOTAL: $3,362,532

People Served in 2008



- Domestic Violence Survivors
- People Facing Foreclosure
- Senior Citizens
- Veterans
- People with Disabilities
- Immigrants
- Homeless Children
- Other Low-Income People

TOTAL: 68,291

Does not include 413,246 hits to web-based legal information resources.

We pledge.
support

Illinois Equal Justice Foundation 2008 Grant Recipients

On October 19, 2007, the Board of Directors unanimously approved 44 grants to 23 non-profit organizations totaling $3,346,532. On June 5, 2008, the Board approved an additional $16,000 in grants to four existing grantees. The grant total for FY 08 was $3,362,532.

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 attain economic self-sufficiency ($30,000).

Center for Analysis of Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems
Downstate

To develop mediation centers in two downstate circuits to meet pressing legal needs in family, housing and consumer matters ($70,000).

Center for Conflict Resolution
Chicago

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

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 ($20,000).

Chicago Legal Clinic
Chicago

To provide legal education, resources and referrals for Cook County residents faced with foreclosure proceedings at an Advice Desk in the Chancery Division of the Cook County Circuit Court ($50,000).

To provide legal education, resources and referrals for Cook County residents dealing with paternity and child support issues at an Advice Desk in the Expedited Child Support Division of the Cook County Circuit Court ($50,000).

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 ($254,000).

To assist unrepresented parties with advice, information and form preparation at the Domestic Relations Self-Help Desk ($35,000).

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

Equip for Equality
Chicago, Rock Island, Carbondale & Springfield

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

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).

Illinois Legal Aid Online
Statewide

To support the 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 legal information projects across the state ($200,000).

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 John R. Tate Advocacy 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 and Springfield

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

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 ($254,000).

To operate legal information centers in the Madison, Champaign and Macon County Courthouses as well as local libraries in the Second Judicial Circuit; to develop similar centers in Sangamon and Logan Counties. and to develop the Peoples Law School in Champaign ($86,000).

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).

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 ($50,000).

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 ($40,000).

Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago
Chicago & Suburban Cook County

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

To provide legal services to families victimized by rescue fraud via the Home Ownership Preservation Project ($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 representation for public housing tenants affected by the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation ($45,000).

2008 Grant Recipients
(continued)

To support a bilingual domestic violence/family law attorney in the northwest Chicago service office to focus on the needs of Latino immigrant families ($41,270).

To protect military personnel and veterans against consumer fraud by providing information and legal assistance ($30,000).

Life Span Center for Legal Services
Chicago

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

National Immigrant Justice Center
Chicago, Berwyn, Waukegan

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

Prairie State Legal Services
Carol Stream, Waukegan, Galesburg, Peoria, Ottawa, Batavia and St. Charles

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).

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 ($254,000).

To operate legal information centers in Winnebago, McLean, Lake and Kankakee county courthouses and to assist in the development of similar centers in Boone, Tazewell and Iroquois counties ($113,230).

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 ($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 ($20,000).

To educate thousands of people in southern Illinois by providing access to legal information by mail, via the internet and a community outpost ($16,500).

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 ($2,500).

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).

We pledge...
accountability

Illinois Equal Justice Foundation Statement of Financial Position

As of June 30, 2008
(with comparative totals for 2007)

Assets	2008	2007
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 95,892	$ 114,013
Contributions receivable	35,000	-
Accounts receivable	-	104
Prepaid expenses	2,831	5,587
Total current assets	133,723	119,704
Property and equipment, net	1,345	2,491
Total Assets	**$ 135,068**	**$ 122,195**
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	$ 3,349	$ 6,188
Accrued payroll	3,991	-
	7,340	6,188
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	49,186	94,475
Temporarily restricted	78,542	21,532
Total net assets	127,728	116,007
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**$ 135,068**	**$ 122,195**

Statement of Activities

For the Year Ended June 30, 2008
(with comparative totals for 2007)

Public Support and Revenue	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	2008 Total	2007 Total
Illinois funding	$ -	$ 3,500,000	$ 3,500,000	$ 3,500,000
Contributions	-	$72, 072	$72, 072	-
Donated services	7,058	-	7,058	15,000
Donated meeting space	594	-	594	1,241
Donated supplies	750	-	750	-
Interest income	2,035	17,644	19,679	37,401
Net assets released from restrictions – satisfaction of program restriction	(3,532,706)	(3,532,706)	-	-
Total public support and revenue	3,543,143	57,010	3,600,153	3,553,642
Expenses				
Program services	3,430,204	-	3,430,204	3,439,197
Management and general	75,610	-	75,610	103,356
Fundraising	82,618	-	82,618	8,925
Total expenses	3,588,432	-	3,588,432	3,551,478
Change in net assets	(45,289)	57,010	11,721	2,164
Net assets, beginning of year	94,475	21,532	116,007	113,843
Net assets, end of year	**$ 49,186**	**$ 78,542**	**$ 127,728**	**$ 116,007**

We pledge...
responsibility

Statement of Functional Expenses

For the Year Ended June 30, 2008
(with comparative totals for 2007)

Functional Expenses	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	2008 Total	2007 Total
Salaries	$ 43,244	$ 21,622	$ 21,622	$ 86,488	$ 80,414
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	6,054	3,027	3,027	12,108	13,866
Total salaries, taxes and fringe benefits	**49,298**	**24,649**	**24,649**	**98,596**	**94,280**
Grants awarded	3,362,532	-	-	3,362,532	3,355,000
Professional fees and consulting	837	29,026	45,533	75,396	64,004
Printing	-	4,661	534	5,195	5,319
Office expense	3,494	4,094	1,158	8,746	4,787
Telephone	2,126	962	962	4,050	3,064
Occupancy	7,612	3,979	3,805	15,396	12,500
Insurance	-	2,491	-	2,491	2,592
Travel	660	516	1,279	2,455	3,822
Meetings	1,326	2,181	2,914	6,421	3,504
Fees and dues	1,247	2,514	1,247	5,008	1,459
Moving	500	250	250	1,000	-
Depreciation	572	287	287	1,146	1,147
Total Expenses	**$ 3,430,204**	**$ 75,610**	**$ 82,618**	**$ 3,588,432**	**$ 3,551,478**

We pledge...
stewardship

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended June 30, 2008
(with comparative totals for 2007)

Cash Flows from Operating Activities	**2007**	**2008**
Cash received – Illinois funding	$ 3,500,000	$ 3,500,000
Cash received – contributions	37,072	-
Cash received – interest income	19,679	37,401
Payments of awarded grants	(3,429,074)	(4,262,150)
Payments for wages and other operating activities	(145,798)	(176,815)
Net cash used by operating activities	(18,121)	(901,564)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Purchases of property and equipment	-	(1,591)
Net cash used by investing activities	-	(1,591)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(18,121)	(903,155)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	114,013	1,017,168
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	$ 95,892	$ 114,013
Reconciliation of Change in Net Assets to Net Cash Used by Operating Activities		
Change in net assets	$ 11,721	$ 2,164
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used by operating activities		
Depreciation	1,146	1,147
Decrease (increase) in		
Contributions receivable	(35,000)	-
Accounts receivable	104	(104)
Prepaid expenses	2,756	(3,452)
Increase (decrease) in		
Grants payable	-	(907,150)
Accounts payable	(2,839)	5,831
Accrued payroll	3,991	-
Net cash used by operating activities	**$ (18,121)**	**$ (901,564)**

financial statements audited by Desmond & Ahern, Ltd.

ILLINOIS
Equal Justice
FOUNDATION

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