<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tenants facing wrongful eviction.</td>
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<td>Survivors of domestic violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patients with legal barriers to health care.</td>
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<td>Consumers bankrupted by medical and other debts.</td>
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<td>Workers cheated out of wages or denied lawful benefits.</td>
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<td>Children who need a stable home.</td>
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<td>Elderly whose economic security or health care is in jeopardy.</td>
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<td>Families denied necessary public benefits.</td>
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<td>Homeowners facing foreclosure.</td>
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<td>Agricultural workers who work for the lowest wage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Americans denied rights and opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmers dealing with debt and new markets.</td>
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</table>
We had to decide whether putting food on our table was more important than paying the electric bill that month…

Every time we went to Legal Aid for their services, we never once felt judged. They actually cared about what we had to say and how to get the results we needed…

Legal Aid has helped us to be a family again.

Amazingly, during 2016 Legal Aid provided free civil legal services to over 24,000 low-income Nebraskans through over 11,000 opened cases, one legal case at a time. That’s a huge amount of legal work. It’s particularly remarkable knowing it involves representing low-income clients with some of life’s toughest legal challenges; families fighting wrongful evictions, women trapped in abusive relationships, parents seeking custody of their children, veterans denied rightfully earned benefits—all just needing some legal help to solve these life-threatening problems.

The bottom line is simple: If low-income Nebraskans have access to a lawyer to protect their rights or to enforce helpful laws, “equal justice” is more than just words, it is reality.

In 2016, my first full year as Executive Director, it was an honor to lead more than 40 lawyers and almost 80 staff to “make equal justice happen” all across Nebraska. In every nook and cranny across the state, Legal Aid was there, going to court and demanding justice under the law; sponsoring Access to Justice Centers where people find they can help themselves; running legal clinics and linking clients with private pro bono lawyers; providing online information and forms; and throughout, delivering on our mission of providing dignity, hope, and opportunity.

This work was recognized by a significant show of support from the Nebraska Unicameral, raising state funding by almost 20% in 2016. Legal Aid formed new partnerships and launched new statewide programs, reaching even more low-income Nebraskans. Legal Aid’s intrepid staff went far and wide to host “Fresh Look” community stakeholder meetings, from Broken Bow to North Omaha, Scottsbluff to Norfolk, asking: How can we do our job even better? How can we reach more struggling Nebraskans and shed a light into their lives?

Legal Aid did all of this and more. Every day, our staff and volunteers helped vulnerable children, victims of domestic violence, exploited seniors, disabled workers, family farmers, Native Americans—and the list goes on—get to a more fair, just, and equitable place. Legal Aid simply “makes equal justice happen” for the people who most need it.

But there’s so much more to do, so many more to help. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Milo Mumgaard
As president of the board of directors for Legal Aid, I’ve had the opportunity to work with tremendously talented and dedicated people. Through Legal Aid’s years of transition, board members have stepped up to assist the staff in many ways. This “hands-on” assistance was helpful in keeping Legal Aid on course during that time. Now, of course, the active participation of the board has waned, as we have a new executive director.

I am hopeful that a year from now I will be writing about important achievements of Legal Aid in bringing legal services to the poor and low-income people of Nebraska.

There are approximately 80 people who work daily for Legal Aid, greeting prospective clients in person or by telephone, providing legal advice to help them through a problem, guiding and instructing them as they represent themselves, and representing them in court in a legal dispute. Clients and prospective clients are treated with respect—something some of them get nowhere else. They learn how the justice system works, and that it is, while slow, much better than all the alternatives. They learn that no matter what their legal problem may be, with assistance from Legal Aid, they will be treated fairly.

For many of these clients, Legal Aid is the last hope. Their low incomes force them to live "on the edge." One small event, even a flat tire, can begin a cascade of misery causing them to lose jobs, day care, income, and housing. They may be facing immediate eviction, violence at home, repossession or execution on their assets, loss of income benefits, or any number of other emergencies. Legal Aid offers protection through the law. Attorneys, and other non-attorney staff, work hard to give each client fair and legal treatment, protecting their rights as members of our society.

In 2016, approximately 315,000 Nebraskans were living on incomes that made them eligible to receive Legal Aid’s services. But, sadly, Legal Aid does not have the means to represent them all. A new national study released by the Legal Services Corporation in May, 2017, reconfirmed what Legal Aid staff sees on a daily basis: “in the past year, 86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help.” Clearly, there many more eligible Nebraskans to serve, many more legal needs to be met, and more justice to be obtained.

Obviously, Legal Aid needs your help. While it does receive funds from the Legal Services Corporation and other state and federal agencies, that funding combined provides only about 80% of its revenue, and as you know, federal funding is not secure. Legal Aid needs private contributions to even hope to maintain its present services. Please help provide equal justice by contributing what you can. Thank you.

Hon. David Piester, President

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**BRENDA**

**FEATURED STORY**

“It was like walking on egg shells, you never knew when he was going to go off... I am so thankful that Legal Aid was there to help me out...They helped me make big decisions in my life; I went back to college. It’s not a hand out, it’s a hand up.”
BY THE NUMBERS

INCOME
We helped almost 1000 families in need of income supports, such as food stamps, social security income, health insurance, taxes, veteran benefits and unpaid wages.

FAMILY
We relieved over 4,000 families who were fighting for stability through protection orders against domestic abuse, custody of their children, divorce and guardianships.

HOUSING
We backed more than 1000 households who were fighting unfair evictions and other housing issues in 2016.

CONSUMER
We served more than 1,700 families with consumer issues, such as medical debts, bankruptcy and keeping on their utilities.

IN 2016, LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA MADE EQUAL JUSTICE HAPPEN FOR MORE THAN 24,000 PEOPLE ACROSS ALL 93 COUNTIES IN NEBRASKA.

IN 2016, OUR CLIENTS WERE

3.9% IMMIGRANTS
20.5% DISABLED
4.9% VETERANS
66.7% WOMEN
30% DEEP POVERTY*
100% IN POVERTY

* DEEP POVERTY IS DEFINED AS FAMILIES OF FOUR EARNING $12,150 PER YEAR OR LESS
LEGAL AID IN ACTION

LEGAL AID WINS AT NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT

Everyday Legal Aid provides high-quality legal representation for low-income Nebraskans before courts across the state. This creates significant relief for thousands of clients, and major advances in the law.

In 2016, Legal Aid attorneys appeared before the Nebraska Supreme Court in three separate major appeals. These Supreme Court cases included standing up for a developmentally disabled client denied basic health care support, and the adequacy of the State’s due process notice to establish orders of paternity and child support. Most significantly, Legal Aid, having co-counseled with a Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) lawyer, won a major case for a legally recognized father from Ohio by challenging the adoption of his daughter in Nebraska over his objections. The Supreme Court, in two detailed opinions, ruled that the father’s consent to the adoption was required under Nebraska law.

NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM OPENS MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

Legal Aid’s Native American Program has a long history of serving the legal needs of Nebraska’s tribal members. As part of a multi-state initiative supported by AmeriCorps, in 2016 Legal Aid established the medical-legal partnership with the Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition in Lincoln and the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska in Omaha. Native Americans experience poverty and health issues at rates significantly higher than the general population; a medical-legal partnership puts Legal Aid right in the health care setting, addressing these disparities through civil legal aid. This project provides free legal representation to Native Americans in cases that promote better health care outcomes.

REACH SERVES RURAL VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In rural counties across Nebraska, access to timely and effective legal help for low-income victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, and elder financial exploitation is too often simply unavailable. In 2016, Legal Aid took major steps, through the support of the Nebraska Crime Commission, to address this inequity through the REACH Initiative (Raising Effective Advocacy for Crime Victims Health and Safety). Working with dozens of community partners, REACH brings Legal Aid attorneys to communities across central and western Nebraska, providing a range of civil legal services to help make victims whole again. These services include not just the immediate domestic relations and exploitation matters, but also gaining good housing, clearing up credit, and obtaining employment.

HELP EXPANDS TO LINCOLN

In 2016, HELP – Legal Aid’s groundbreaking medical-legal partnership project with Omaha-area hospitals – expanded into Lincoln to work directly with a low-income community health center. With funding for this expansion supported by a three-year grant from the Community Health Endowment, HELP legal staff work directly with staff and patients at Lincoln’s People’s Health Center, and with both Lutheran Family Services and PHC at Health 360. Working in tandem with the medical providers on-site at both locations, Legal Aid staff identifies and addresses underlying civil legal needs hindering positive health care outcomes for these low-income patients.

THE COST OF BEING POOR - ABUSIVE DEBT COLLECTION GETS ATTENTION

Legal Aid in Nebraska’s leading provider of direct legal help for low-income consumer debtors, with a deep understanding of the debt collection challenges facing our clients. In 2016, Legal Aid focused on providing a window into this harsh reality through several community legal education initiatives. Legal Aid provided detailed research on the nature, amount and frequency of debt collection judgments for a national article on Nebraska’s collection practices in ProPublica in February, 2016. Working with community partners like Voices for Children, Legal Aid staff also participated in “The Cost of Being Poor,” a community education event held in October, 2016, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Legal Aid staff presented our research in the Omaha area and discussed the relationship between poverty, race, and judgments for debt collections – some of which were for less than two dollars.

NEW ONLINE SELF-HELP WITH LAW HELP NEBRASKA

Help from Legal Aid comes in many forms and many places – including online. In 2016, Legal Aid used support from the Legal Services Corporation to expand this online commitment through the Law Help Nebraska website. The site provides a user friendly, virtual self-help system for those needing quick legal assistance, with a focus on collections problems and housing issues. This site especially helps close a major gap in rural areas lacking physical lawyer presence. Statewide, it helps in unclog court systems, generates legal forms, and gives information on how to appear in court. When as many as 90% of people with collections problems show up in court without a lawyer or knowing how to represent themselves, the Law Help Nebraska website, which can be found at lawhelp.legalaidofnebraska.org, is a lifeline.
ELDER JUSTICE PROJECT INCREASES SCOPE

Legal Aid has sponsored the Elder AccessLine for over thirty years, helping thousands of low-income seniors across Nebraska with legal and financial problems. In 2016, Legal Aid expanded its Elder Justice Project through a new AmeriCorps position, to focus on the growth in elder abuse and financial exploitation. The Project’s Elder Justice Fellow conducts vigorous outreach and works closely with service providers, law enforcement, senior housing, senior health care providers, private lawyers, and others in Nebraska’s extensive elder service network to provide direct legal help to elder victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

DISASTER RELIEF PROJECT ENLISTS HUNDREDS OF PRO BONO ATTORNEYS

Legal Aid is a national leader in developing comprehensive legal responses to disasters, such as floods, fires, and tornadoes, for low-income clients. The legal problems facing people after a disaster come fast and linger for a long time, especially when there is no legal help. The Disaster Relief Project is filling this gap through special LSC funding. In 2016 staff developed new resources, including a Disaster Guide and the Agricultural Disaster Resources Guide, and trained over 135 pro bono attorneys with a whole range of common issues, including FEMA, housing, credit, and tax issues. While no one wants a disaster, Nebraska is uniquely ready to quickly provide direct legal services to low-income victims.

JUVENILE REENTRY NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP LAUNCHES

In 2016, Legal Aid was selected as one of only four national host sites for a Juvenile Reentry Fellowship from the National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC). Working with Lancaster County’s large network of service providers and the justice system, the Juvenile Reentry Project Fellow provides free civil legal services for young people 24 years old or younger in Lancaster County reintegrating after leaving the juvenile justice system. By focusing, on state law requiring the sealing of juvenile records, the Fellow helps young Nebraskans overcome the impact of a juvenile record, which can be a barrier to future employment, housing, and education.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE CENTERS RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Legal Aid knows that many people who cannot afford a lawyer may simply need a little bit of legal help. Through the walk-in Access to Justice Centers (A2J) in both Omaha and Lincoln, Legal Aid provides on-demand legal advice and guidance to pro se litigants navigate their way through a complex legal system. People walk into the Center with no right to counsel in their civil matter and no knowledge of how to fix their legal issues; they walk out understanding legal remedies with tools in hand, ready to seek real and concrete solutions for themselves at the courthouse. In 2016, this initiative was recognized by the American Bar Association with an article in the Spring 2016 issue of “Dialogue,” emphasizing both the center’s outcomes, and how solving legal barriers empowers clients to take on even more of life’s challenges.

INAUGURAL EQUAL JUSTICE CORPS SUMMER OUTREACH

Legal Aid is committed to educating low-income clients across the entire state, a daunting task. In the summer of 2016, young advocates from across Nebraska pioneered the first Equal Justice Corps (EJC). EJC members went out to events in over 30 communities—county fairs, farmers’ markets, parades, NebraskaLand Days, Oregon Trail Days, and many more—to talk to people about how Legal Aid is there to help. Hundreds of people shared with the EJC about their struggles to pay bills, keep their housing, and find stability for their families. The EJC has become a model for community education and outreach, providing another opportunity for passionate interns and volunteers to make equal justice happen.
LAUREL JOHNSON
STAFF ATTORNEY | OMAHA

“I am what I wanted to be when I grew up. Every day I have the opportunity to represent clients on matters involving what I would argue is one of the most fundamental rights humanity will ever have: our children.”

AYDEE RADER
PARALEGAL | OMAHA

“Working at Legal Aid gave me the opportunity to be part of a team that excels in providing legal assistance to people who would not have access to it otherwise.”

AMANDA McMAHON
STAFF ATTORNEY | NORFOLK

“I have always been one to root for the underdog. After 10½ years, sometimes it feels like I’m not making a difference. The truth is, we make a difference for every client we advise. Little by little we are doing our part to level the playing field and grant equal justice for all.”

SHAWN FARRITOR
STAFF ATTORNEY | GRAND ISLAND

“I truly love working for Legal Aid because it is such a fulfilling job. The feeling you receive when you secure a benefit or enforce a person’s rights cannot be measured. We get the opportunity to help people and families on a daily basis.”
18 WITH SEVEN LOCATIONS, ONE SATELLITE OFFICE, AND AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF VOLUNTEER PRIVATE LAWYERS, LEGAL AID PROVIDES ASSISTANCE IN ALL OF NEBRASKA’S 93 COUNTIES.
Thank you to our volunteers and unpaid interns for dedicating their time and energy to Legal Aid of Nebraska’s mission.

**2016 VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS**

Under the Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) program, Legal Aid recruits private attorneys to assist clients living at or near poverty, pro bono or at reduced rate with civil legal matters in counties more than one hour’s driving distance from a Legal Aid office. For more information on how to get involved with the PAI, volunteer, intern, or law clerk programs, please contact Christine Stolarskyj at (402) 348-1069 ext. 248 or email cstolarskyj@legalaidofnebraska.org.

**VOLUNTEERS & INTERNS**

Juan Palma Almanza  
Brett Basbourn  
Ashley Beuckenhorst  
Ashley Brugmann  
Mitch Carlson  
Connor Carstens  
Bayleigh Collins  
Theresa Cusic  
Jacinta D’Albunte  
Kari Davis  
Adam Guck  
Ciera Harris  
Taylor Herbert  
Mustafa Kram  
Eben Kresha  
David Lehan  
Kelly Lejeune  
Tian Lenaghan  
Lucy Li

**PRO BONO ATTORNEYS**

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Jonathan Brandt, Holdrege  
Jeri Hunter, Bellevue  
James Trueell, Grand Island

Leigh Lynam  
Daniel Marks  
Natalie Miller  
Rosa Najera  
Juan Palma  
David Pointner  
David Pucci  
Leslie Sears  
Peter Sitzmann  
Aliena Skrundevskiy  
Madeline Sobek  
Chelsea Stensgaard

**PAI ATTORNEYS**

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Amanda Baron, Blair  
John Bigley, Omaha  
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Mike Borders, Broken Bow  
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Weitz Family Foundation

MANY THANKS TO ALL THE GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS WHO HELPED US MAKE EQUAL JUSTICE HAPPEN IN 2016. WE APPRECIATE YOU AND RESPECT YOUR PRIVACY.
NOTE: Best practices for non-profit organizations indicate that the organization should have operating reserves equal to between 3 and 6 months operating expenses. At 12-31-15, Legal Aid of Nebraska had operating reserves of approximately 3.4 months, based on the 2016 budget.
THE MISSION OF LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA IS TO PROMOTE JUSTICE, DIGNITY, HOPE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH QUALITY CIVIL LEGAL AID FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN.

IN MEMORY OF SHELDON SKELCHER

In 2016, Legal Aid of Nebraska lost one of their most respected and valued long-time staff members: Shelldon Skelcher.

Over the more than ten years that Shelldon served as Managing Attorney of Legal Aid’s westernmost office in Scottsbluff, Shelldon consistently provided high-quality legal services to thousands of some of the most powerless, vulnerable people in our state. Shelldon’s calm and good-humored service to his clients provided these fellow Nebraskans the dignity and hope that is at the foundation of our mission.

As Sargent Shriver, who led the founding of the Legal Services Corporation, once said: “It is not what you get out of life that counts. It’s what you give and what is given from the heart.” This was Shelldon, and Legal Aid of Nebraska was extremely fortunate to have been even just a small part of Shelldon’s life.
"My attorney was so personable and he truly wanted to give me the best legal advice and services as humanly possible. He gave me total assurance at every turn."

"You have proven how great your team is, and how important your services are."

"I think this is a wonderful service provided for people without resources. You provide excellent service with kindness and understanding."

"My attorney was absolutely the greatest; she was so very nice! She made my nightmares finally come to an end."

"Legal Aid is a great example of the best resources and the best use of tax dollars."

"I am very thankful that you have legal help for elders—they really need it in this day and age."
LEGAL HELP IS OFTEN THE ONLY THING STANDING BETWEEN A LOW-INCOME FAMILY’S EFFORTS TO SEE BETTER DAYS, OR SUFFERING A FALL INTO DEEPER POVERTY.

WE’RE HERE TO HELP