

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



**VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS
PROJECT**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	PG 3
• Joanna Allison, Esq., Executive Director, VLP	
SUCCESS STORIES	PG 4-5
• Alex Loomis, Esq., Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan	
• Monika Wirtz, Esq.	
CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS	PG 6
COMMUNITY IMPACT	PG 7
VOLUNTEER IMPACT	PG 8
CASE BREAKDOWN	PG 9
FINANCIAL OUTCOME	PG 10
• 2021-2022	
FINANCIALS	PG 11
MESSAGE FROM VLP BOARD	PG 12
• William Roberts, Esq.	
HILA	PG 13-14
• Housing: Tenant Advocacy	
• Landlord Advocacy Project	
AWARDEES	PG 15
• 2021 - 2022 Denis Maguire Awardees	
◦ Sharon Jones, Esq., Ted Papadopoulos, Esq., Joseph D'Antuono, Esq., Alexandra Roman, Esq., Anthony Czar, Esq., WilmerHale, LLP	
• 2021-2022 Gideons Trumpet Award	
◦ Hon. Judge David G. Sacks, Ret., Sharon Toffler, Esq.	
DONORS	PG 16-17

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

From 2021 to 2022, fulfilling our mission of meeting the needs of low-income residents of the Greater Boston area was only possible with the commitment and generosity of our volunteers and donors. Your support helped VLP to complete a circle that has been evolving since 1977



as we continue to recruit, train, and mentor our volunteers to increase access to justice in our communities. With the help of our pro bono volunteers and interns, we have been able to discharge more than \$2,157,959 worth of debt, serve more than 4,686 people at housing court, and help 2,996 clients with their family law matters. Our call center ERLI (Eastern Region Legal Intake) provided legal assistance for more than 14,080 people. Our accomplishments from the last two years are attributed to the dedicated VLP staff and the generosity of our volunteer's time, expertise, and financial support. Because of our volunteers, our supporters, our board, and our staff, forty-six years later Volunteer Lawyers Project continues to carry out our mission of providing equal access to representation for lower-income households in the greater Boston area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanna G. Allison".

Joanna G. Allison Esq. VLP Executive Director

SUCCESS STORIES

APPEALS

Congratulations to Pro Bono Attorney Alex Loomis, who successfully briefed and argued a Family Law appeal! Alex's well-thought-out oral argument for the case, his preparation, and his knowledge of the matter led to an excellent result for our Client. Thanks to Alex's incredible appellate advocacy, the Appeals Court found that the Trial Judge's ruling deprived our Client of due process and improperly lowered the child support she received for her three children, all of whom have disabling conditions. The Appeals Court issued a 23-page opinion detailing the lower court judge's errors. In addition, this case win helped warn trial judges of the importance of following the law, especially when dealing with pro se litigants.



VLP Housing and Appeals Staff Attorney Caitlyn Treem commended Alex for his dedication. "He is a zealous advocate for our clients, and we're so grateful to him and his team at Quinn Emanuel for their unwavering support."

SUCCESS STORIES

HOUSING

Monika Wirtz, Esq. represented an 85-year-old disabled client whose landlord filed an eviction case against her for providing her daughter a key to her building and alleged the daughter aided in the theft of the building's packages, asserting the surveillance video captured the act. Monika requested a reasonable accommodation on behalf of our client for the daughter to be permitted to have



a key to the building to assist her mother and her wheelchair user grandson, living with our client under her guardianship. The landlord first denied the request and aggressively continued to assert that the daughter had assisted in stealing packages. Monika travelled to the landlord's office to review the video and discovered that the video showed that the daughter was not at all involved in the theft. The landlord backed down and reinstated our client's tenancy, dismissed the eviction case, and granted a reasonable accommodation for the client's daughter to have a key to continue to assist our client and her grandson.

Monika's diligence and hard work allowed our client to preserve her tenancy. Thanks, Monika, for your work in keeping our client housed and thank you for taking another case!



CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age range: 6 years - 99 years
- Average age: 47 years old
- Average household income is 103% of the federal poverty level
- 66% (two thirds) are women
- 1,747 are survivors of domestic violence
- 1,593 have a disability
- Speak over 40 different languages and dialects



COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 15,027 people assisted
- 14,080 service requests fielded by ERLI
- 9,728 people received info and referral
- 5,299 people received legal assistance

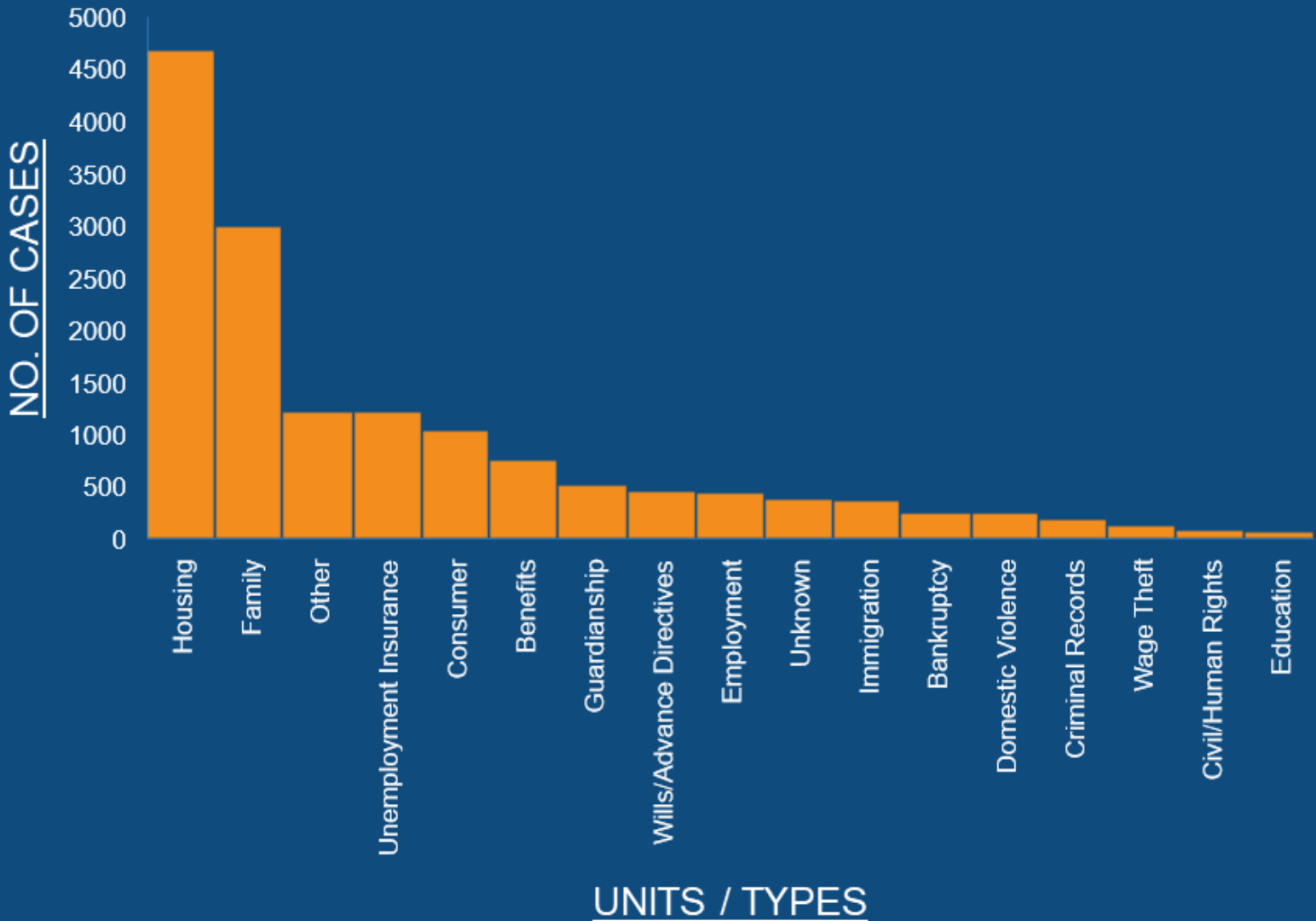


1709H Conference

VOLUNTEER IMPACT

- 11,759 Pro Bono Hours
- 540 Pro Bono Volunteers

CASE BREAKDOWN



Housing 4,686

Family 2,996

Other 1,224

Unemployment Insurance 1,217

Consumer 1,033

Benefits 761

Guardianship 509

Wills/Advance Directives 462

Employment 442

Unknown 379

Immigration 362

Bankruptcy 249

Domestic Violence 246

Civil/Human Rights 77

Wage Theft 131

Civil/Human Rights 77

Education 67



FINANCIAL OUTCOME

- \$78,480 recovery in Wage Theft and Employment cases
- \$1,027,448 Unemployment Insurance benefits awarded or preserved
- \$2,157,959 Bankruptcy debt discharged
- \$572,690 debt discharged outside of Bankruptcy
- \$159,272 rental assistance obtained
- \$203,700 mortgage assistance obtained

FINANCIALS

Income and expenses for the years ended Dec 31, 2021 and 2022

INCOME

2021

- Interest, Other Income & In-kind - \$97,857
- Contributions - \$179,626
- Grants & Contracts – \$4,282,679

Total - \$4,560,162

2022

- Interest, Other Income, & In-kind - \$143,691
- Contributions - \$176,151
- Grants and Contracts – \$4,971,919

Total - \$5,291,761

EXPENSES

2021

- Fundraising - \$84,323
- General & Administrative - \$343,869
- Program - \$4,092,768

Total - \$4,520,960

2022

- Fundraising - \$109,136
- General & Administrative - \$476,924
- Program - \$4,362,860

Total - \$4,948,920



MESSAGE FROM VLP BOARD CHAIR - WILLIAM ROBERTS, ESQ.

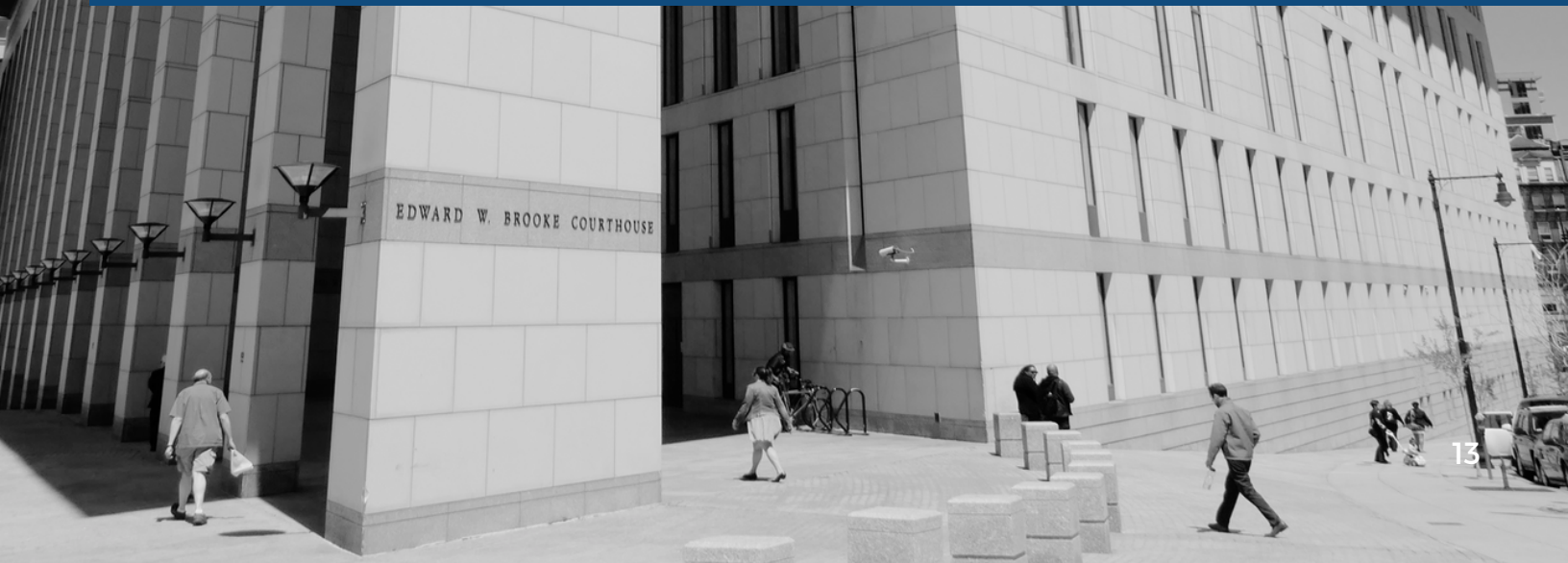
“The past few years have presented significant challenges to the legal and vulnerable communities that VLP serves. How Joanna and the entire staff of VLP have adapted and stepped up to meet these challenges to continue to work with their dedicated volunteers and serve their clients has been impressive. Their efforts have made me, and the entire board, even prouder to be a part of this great organization. On behalf of the board, I'd like to express our gratitude to VLP's staff and its many volunteers for their crucial work to ensure access to justice.”



H.I.L.A.

HOUSING INSTABILITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE

HILA is funded by the MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (formerly the MA Department of Housing and Community Development). The HILA Program provides a continuum of legal assistance to low-income tenants facing eviction to preserve or achieve housing stability and to qualifying owner-occupant landlords seeking assistance to preserve or achieve housing stability. (Owner-occupant landlords are defined as individuals who own, live in, and rent out part out of a 2-3 family home.) HILA provides referrals, advice and counsel, and limited pre-trial representation in all sittings of the Massachusetts Housing Court as well as assistance in select sittings of the District Court where capacity allows. HILA may also provide extended representation to clients with disabilities.



H.I.L.A.

HOUSING INSTABILITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE

HOUSING: TENANT ADVOCACY

VLP's long-standing Housing unit runs two clinics; the Lawyer for the Day (LFD) Clinic provides the opportunity for volunteer attorneys to advise and represent low-income, unrepresented tenants at the Eastern Housing Court on Tuesday mornings and afternoons. On Thursday mornings and afternoons, the Housing unit also runs the Answer and Discovery (A&D) Virtual Clinic where volunteer attorneys or paralegals are provided with the opportunity to advise clients who have been served with a Notice to Quit, a Summons and Complaint and need help with preparing an answer and request for discovery. The unit also provides opportunities for volunteers to take on Limited Assistance Representation cases. Most cases are for evictions. **Learn more: vlpnet.org/housing/**

LANDLORD ADVOCACY PROJECT

The VLP Landlord Advocacy Project began in 2020 to advocate for low-income landlords who reside in the properties they rent out, often relying on their tenants' rent to pay their mortgage. The program also has an active association with the University of Massachusetts School of Law, Justice Bridge Program, Hampden County Legal Clinic, and Legal Squirrel (a virtual platform to help connect VLP with its target population). These key partnerships expanded VLP's capacity to reach and assist low-income landlords statewide. The Project provides volunteer attorneys and paralegals opportunities to advise clients in 1-on-1 Legal Advice Clinics, Limited Assistance Representation, Education & Training Ambassador, Upstreaming, and Docket Outreach programs. Most cases are RAFT and eviction related. **Learn more: vlpnet.org/landlord-volunteer/**

2021 & 2022 GIDEON'S TRUMPET AWARDEES



2021, HON. DAVID G. SACKS (RET.) 2022, SHARON TOFFLER, ESQ.

2021 DENIS MAGUIRE AWARDEES



SHARON V. JONES, ESQ.



TED PAPADAPOULOS, ESQ.



JOSEPH N. D'ANTUONO, ESQ.

2022 DENIS MAGUIRE AWARDEES



ALEXANDRA ROMAN, ESQ.



ANTHONY CZAR, ESQ.

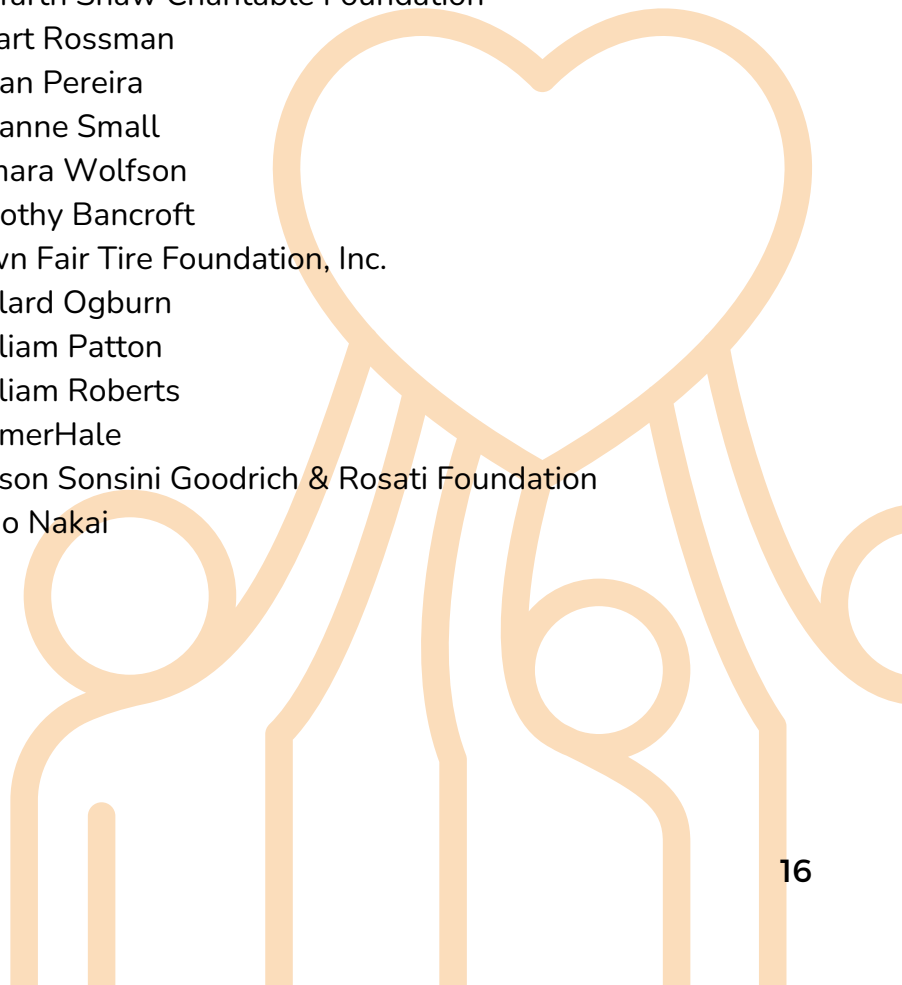


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Anne Bowie, Public Service Manager,
accepts the award on behalf of WilmerHale.

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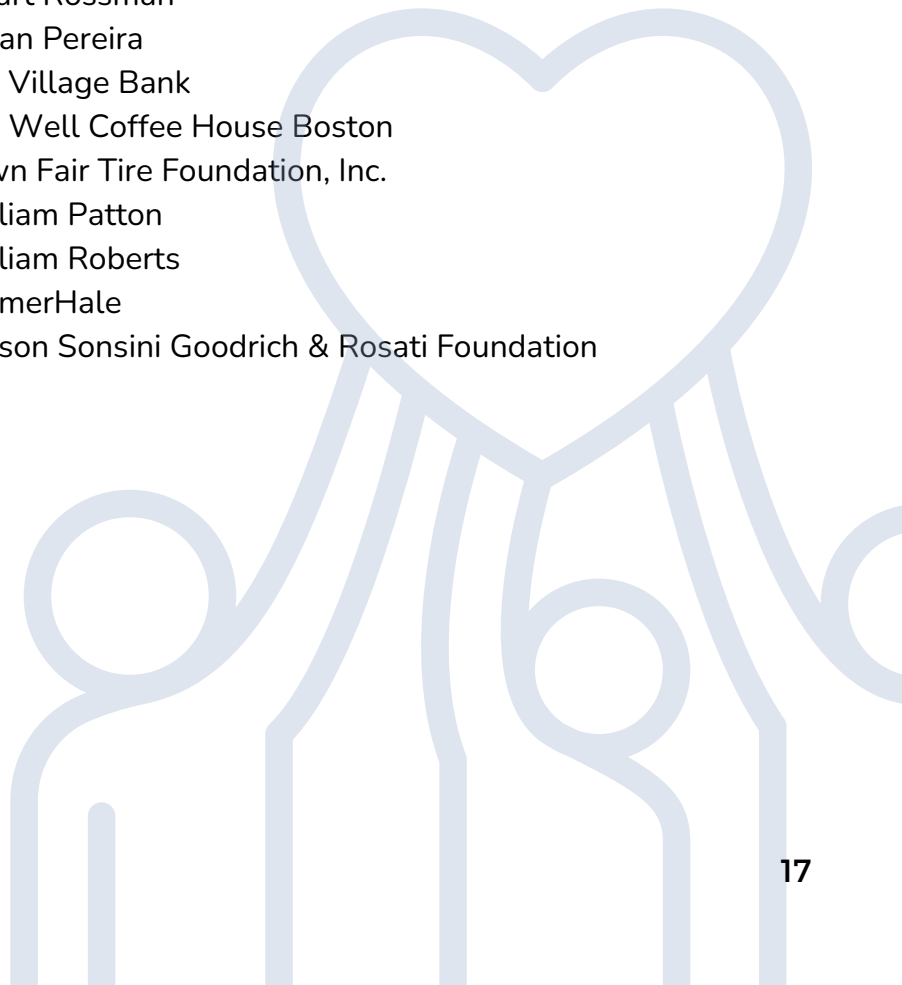
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From all of us at VLP, thank you!

LSC
America's Partner
for Equal Justice

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION



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