

2022-2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



HOUSTON
VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS

A SERVICE OF THE HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2022-2023 CHAIR



It was my privilege to serve as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Houston Volunteer Lawyers in 2022-2023. Even as our world continued to change following the COVID shutdown, the need for civil legal services remained significant.

An early success was our ability to once again offer weekly veterans' clinics at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center as it reopened its doors in September 2022. Each Friday, the number of veterans who came to these clinics increased as word spread that the HVL Friday Veterans Clinics were back. By the end of the Bar year, 10% of all clients served were veterans.

Continuing to offer the Friday Legal Advice Line clinics virtually resulted in more than 4,000 individuals receiving legal advice and counsel provided by 219 volunteer attorneys. To increase the effectiveness and reach of legal clinics, the Houston Bar Association merged its Legal Line and Legal Line for Spanish speaking clients with HVL. With this merger, individuals who are unable to speak to an attorney on a Friday afternoon due to work or family commitments now have an opportunity to schedule an appointment on a Wednesday evening. The very dedicated Spanish speaking attorneys still volunteer twice a month for a clinic to speak with the 10% of HVL clients for whom Spanish is their first language.

A final change that occurred during the Bar year was the transition of leadership at the Executive Director level. Anne Chandler gave notice in early 2023 that she would be relocating to Austin but would remain available to assist with the onboarding of her replacement. After a thorough search, HVL was lucky to welcome Jessica Howton Stool as the new Executive Director in April. With Jessica in place, I felt very confident handing over the position of Board Chair to Greg Moore and am excited to see the organization continue to flourish.

David Harrell

Board Chair, 2022-2023

Houston Volunteer Lawyers

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2023-2024 CHAIR



The 2023-2024 Houston Volunteer Lawyers Board year started in June 2023, and I was honored to accept the role of Board Chair. One area of expansion for Houston Volunteer Lawyers that I am especially happy to support is the provision of legal assistance for lawful permanent residents eligible for naturalization. HVL hosted our first naturalization clinic in June. Pro bono attorneys and summer associates from Morgan Lewis and Kirkland & Ellis joined HVL staff attorneys to help lawful permanent residents apply for citizenship. We all learned a lot from this first clinic and plan to hold more. Houston Volunteer Lawyers was awarded the opportunity to serve as a Host Organization for a Fellow from Equal Justice Works. This Fellowship will allow HVL to hire an attorney experienced in immigration law to join the staff for two years starting in Fall 2023. This in-house expertise will be a bonus to HVL's expansion into this area of law.

Understanding the operational process in place at Houston Volunteer Lawyers has been an early focus for me as I began my year as Board Chair. Jessica Howton Stool, the organization's new Executive Director, and I have been impressed by the efficiency of the application and intake system in place. Using the online application process, tens of thousands of individuals apply each year. Many who apply do not meet the eligibility criteria or have legal issues that are not provided by pro bono attorneys. These individuals receive an immediate referral to other agencies that may be able to help.

Those eligible for services are further triaged to one of two types of service. About 85% are given an appointment to speak with a pro bono attorney during a Legal Advice Clinic. The remaining 15% are further vetted to determine if their legal issue would benefit from pro bono representation and if the issue is of the type that pro bono attorneys will accept. The need for civil legal assistance by the hundreds of thousands of our eligible, low-income neighbors can overwhelm us and leave us feeling that the problem is too big to tackle. Fortunately, the Board of Directors and staff at Houston Volunteer Lawyers are dedicated to continuing to find ways to offer pro bono assistance. Each client served meets our mission to promote equal access to justice for all. Each of you who volunteers your time and legal expertise should be proud of that.

As my term of service continues, I wonder how we might serve more of our neighbors in need. What can I do? What can the Board of Directors do? Can we encourage more attorneys to get involved? Could we, as attorneys, challenge ourselves to represent a client with a legal issue outside our areas of practice? Could we tackle the legal issues that are messy and complicated? As a Bar of more than 10,000 attorneys, are we collectively doing enough?

In this Year in Review, you will read direct quotes from other attorneys who discovered that they had benefited as much or more than the client they served. You will also see a list of attorneys and firms that exceeded the challenge to provide pro bono legal services last year. I challenge myself and you to see your name highlighted in next year's report.

Thank you in advance for helping to promote equal access to justice for all.

Greg Moore
Board Chair, 2023-2024
Houston Volunteer Lawyers

A FAREWELL LETTER FROM ANNE CHANDLER



The 2022-2023 Bar year was one of significant changes for me personally and professionally. Sadly, I experienced a family loss with the death of my brother and the entire Houston Volunteer Lawyers staff lost our long-time receptionist, Mary Puente, who died unexpectedly at the end of 2022. Saying goodbye to these two special people in my life reminded me that life is precious and unpredictable. I made the decision to move forward my lifelong passion of working to increase access to justice by transitioning to Austin to start a statewide center for immigration legal resources and advocacy organization.

Reflecting on the tremendous work that was accomplished during my tenure with Houston Volunteer Lawyers made this transition bittersweet. I am so proud of the staff and our pro bono attorneys who never gave up, even during the unprecedented weeks and months when our world changed to respond to the

COVID 19 pandemic. The team made an immediate pivot from a history of providing in-person clinics to a virtual service model. Together Houston Volunteer Lawyers' staff and pro bono attorneys continued to provide essential legal services to a population that experienced the impact of the shut-down in greater measure than many others. As the world returned to our new normal, Houston Volunteer Lawyers took the lessons learned on the efficiency and effectiveness of utilizing virtual tools to provide legal assistance and coupled those with the realization that some of the most vulnerable did not have access to these tools and began to create a hybrid model of service delivery.

Recognizing the need for HVL to retain and recruit top notch attorneys and staff, the 2022-2023 Board of Directors conducted a market study of the salary structure of competitive legal aid organizations that ended in a much needed salary adjustment. Knowing firsthand the incredible skills of Houston Volunteer Lawyers staff, it was a pleasure to work alongside the Board to introduce a new salary structure that fairly compensates each staff member based on market rate, relevant experience, and builds in annual performance rewards. This adjustment was long overdue. I thank the HVL Board for supporting this effort and the Houston Bar Foundation for assuring the funds would be available to provide the increases in salary until our fundraising grows to meet these increases.

A final change that occurred with the support of the HVL Board, our pro bono pool of attorneys, our funders, and the existing immigration services providers was broadening the menu of legal services offered to include immigration services. Houston Volunteer Lawyers is now assisting lawful permanent residents with the naturalization process.

Houston Volunteer Lawyers is in the excellent hands of the Executive Director, Jessica Howton Stool. The two of us had worked together for years; so, I know Jessica's deep commitment to justice and the tremendous skills she has that will help to move forward pro bono programs so Houstonians can access justice. Goodbyes are hard. Please know Houston Volunteer Lawyers will always hold a special place in my heart.

Anne Chandler

Executive Director, 2020-2023

Houston Volunteer Lawyers

INTRODUCING JESSICA HOWTON STOOL



Thank you for the warm welcome I received when I joined Houston Volunteer Lawyers as the Executive Director in April!

My arrival coincided with the start of the new Board year for the wonderful members of the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Board of Directors. Beginning together, I am excited to build the future of the organization with these dedicated men and women who so generously serve on the Board. And I offer a heartfelt thanks to the staff who welcomed me so graciously. I know that change is hard and this staff, having gone through the worldwide pandemic with Anne, certainly felt a special connection to her. Yet, they threw open their arms and embraced me into the fold.

Having served for 10 years at Tahirih Justice Center, the last 8 as its Managing Attorney, I have dedicated my career to providing legal services to those who cannot afford it. I bring a strong belief that justice should not depend on one's ability to afford a lawyer. With no right to legal counsel in civil law coupled with the knowledge that all of us will interact with the justice system on the civil side at some point in our lives, leading this organization to provide pro bono counsel for thousands of residents in the greater Houston area is a perfect fit for me.

I look forward to getting to know and work with the hundreds of attorneys who volunteer their time and talents to provide legal services to so many of our neighbors. Each year, thousands of hours of legal expertise giving legal advice and extended representation services to low-income individuals are provided by these dedicated volunteers. I also know that a successful pro bono model does not exist without excellent staff who are critical in creating the match between client and volunteer attorney. I have already witnessed the Houston Volunteer Lawyers staff work tirelessly to support this model.

For everyone who receives legal assistance, there are thousands more who also need it. The numbers can be overwhelming. There will always be room to grow. But each person served has been given equal access to justice. I can't wait to see how many more of our neighbors Houston Volunteer Lawyers will help in the coming years!

Jessica Howton Stool
Executive Director
Houston Volunteer Lawyers

2022-2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

David Harrell

Chair-Elect

Greg Moore

Treasurer

Collin J. Cox

Secretary

Robert Painter

Immediate Past Chair

Keri D. Brown

Directors, Term 2022-2024

Emma Doineau

Jamie Leader

Peter Lowy

Cassandra McGarvey

Aaron Reimer

Andrew Yeh

Directors, Term 2021-2023

Jacqueline Furlow

Chanler Langham

Audrey Momanaee

Terry W. Roberson

Tramaine Chargois Singleton

Tony Visage

Ex-Officio

Houston Bar Association

President

Christopher V. Popov

Houston Bar Foundation

Chair

Christian A. Garza

Houston Young Lawyers Association

Kelly Hanen

Houston Bar Association

Mindy Davidson

Judicial Representative

Hon. Jerry Simoneaux

HOUSTON VOLUNTEER LAWYERS STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jessica Howton Stool

STAFF ATTORNEYS

Natasha Bahri
Staff Attorney

Barbara "Bobbie" Cochran
Staff Attorney

Maricarmen Dollar
Supervising Attorney

Joyce Helfman
Managing Attorney

Andrew Lehmann
Supervising Attorney

Luz Martinez Brennan
Staff Attorney and Data Analyst

Blenda Ruiz
Staff Attorney

Stephanie Sommerlatte
Supervising Attorney

Emma Bykerk
Hunton Andrews Kurth Fellow

Michelle Tewal
Staff Attorney

Elizabeth Tran
Legal Services Director

Barbara Urdiales
Staff Attorney

PRO BONO

Brittany Krohn
Pro Bono Director

May Murdoch
Pro Bono Coordinator

Leilani Ortiz
Program Coordinator

LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Yamilex Aguirre
Program Coordinator

Angeles Calderon
Intake Manager

Natalie Garcia
Case Worker

Deon Hunter
Program Assistant

Jacqueline Lopez
Case Worker

Gabrielle McKeller
Program Coordinator

Kenia Montano
Program Coordinator

Natalia Reyes
Lead Program Coordinator

Sibeles "Felix" Torres
Case Worker

ADMINISTRATION

Marilyn Brown
Director of Grants & Special Projects

Yaroslav Diaz
IT Junior Administrator

Thao Dong
Senior Staff Accountant

Thao Nguyen
Staff Accountant

Laura Lopez
Part-Time Receptionist

In Memoriam

Mary Puente
Receptionist

BRIDGING *The legal gap*

In the greater Houston area, 888,000 vulnerable households experience at least one civil legal issue every year. With no right to an attorney for civil legal matters, these individuals are left to navigate the justice system alone when facing divorce, expunction, probate, eviction, naturalization, discrimination, and hundreds of other civil legal matters.

Thousands of individuals apply for legal assistance every year. Hundreds of attorneys donate their time and legal expertise to help. Houston Volunteer Lawyers serves as the bridge in this legal gap.

For more than 40 years, staff and volunteers have worked together to provide legal assistance to as many clients as possible. Several remarkable partnerships have helped spread the word! And as community needs grow and change, new partnerships are created.

Thanks to our many long-serving community partners that returned to in-person service in 2022-2023.

- Texas Children's Hospital and Houston Volunteer Lawyers celebrated 10 years of a very successful Medical-Legal Partnership in November 2022.
- Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center opened its campus again for the return of weekly Veterans Legal Clinics.
- Dress for Success hosted attorneys for the 2nd year who provided estate planning legal assistance for their clients.
- The City of Houston opened its facilities once again (post COVID) for bi-monthly Will-A-Thons.
- Houston Volunteer Lawyers continued as one of five members of the Eviction Defense Coalition, Harris County's legal response to evictions.
- VNTeamwork, a Vietnamese centered social services agency, partnered with the Houston Volunteer Lawyers' Low Income Taxpayers Clinic to assist its clients with tax issues.
- South Texas College of Law partners with HVL on veteran projects, eviction work and co-hosts the annual IRS Tax Settlement Day.



In 2022-2023, with the need for free legal assistance growing, Houston Volunteer Lawyers welcomed new partners!

- Working with the Public Defenders' office, dozens of clients were referred to HVL for assistance with Record Clearing and Expungement cases.
- In response to community need, Houston Volunteer Lawyers expanded its menu of services to include assistance for immigrants eligible to apply for naturalization. Special thanks go to the Spring Branch Family Development Center for hosting our first naturalization clinic.
- Two new opportunities for pro bono attorneys to provide free legal advice and counsel were created when the Houston Bar Association and Houston Volunteer Lawyers merged our services together for Legal Lines.
- The Harris County Attorney's office invited Houston Volunteer Lawyers to join them for presentations in each Harris County Commissioners Court member's district to discuss the importance of estate planning and will preparation.

Thanks to these community partners and dedicated pro bono attorneys, approximately 5,000 low-income individuals in the greater Houston area received legal assistance last year.



ATTORNEYS *benefit...*

Many attorneys find that in doing pro bono work, they end up benefiting in many ways themselves. ABA's Model Rule 6.1 recommends an aspirational goal of 50 hours of pro bono legal services for every attorney each year.

"It is not only the right thing to do, but it is very, very necessary for lawyers who have the resources that we all have access to, to provide those services to folks who can't otherwise afford them."

Alex Roberts, Partner – Beck Redden LLP

PRO BONO DEVELOPS COMMUNICATION SKILLS

"Doing pro bono work was really helpful in learning about an attorney-client relationship and learning how to communicate with a client." – **Emma Sajdak, Associate – Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP**

"I'm glad I was able to simplify a complicated and stressful situation for my client."

Matthew Goldstein, Associate Attorney – Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

"We helped each other to recognize that there are difficult questions that somebody will have to answer when she can no longer make decisions about her life and property (whether because she is incapacitated or deceased). I helped her to understand what she can do to influence those decisions. She helped to impress upon me how difficult these issues can be and showed me an example of how to handle them with both firmness and humility."

Ryan Penner, Associate - Vinson & Elkins LLP

PRO BONO IMPROVES LEGAL WRITING SKILLS

"I learned how to write interrogatories. I learned how to do requests for admissions. I learned how to mediate a case. Those are three concrete things that I didn't necessarily learn in law school."

Veronica Lockett, Attorney - Travis County Mental Health Public Defender

"This case helped me strengthen will drafting skills."

Austin Lorch, Associate - Haynes and Boone, LLP

"Judge Horwitz was very complimentary of the prove-up questions. He said they could be used in teaching a seminar on the efficient handling of a guardianship case. He actually brought that up again before he ended the hearing and asked if I would share the list of questions with the court."

Kevin J. Vaughan, Senior Counsel – GSC & SSHE, Exxon Mobil Corporation

PRO BONO HELPS DEVELOP CASE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

"I valued the chance to identify and evaluate the options that might help the client. The client had no familiarity with the legal process, so we had lengthy discussions about how we were proceeding and why."

Mark Doré, Associate – Gibbs & Bruns LLP

"I learned that I need to have clearer boundaries, offer less assistance outside the scope of the case, and tap out earlier when there are significant barriers to providing the desired legal service."

Michelle Roberts, Attorney – Retirement Planners of America

PRO BONO SHARPENS NEGOTIATION SKILLS

"The eviction was stayed and eventually dismissed and sealed. I negotiated a settlement with the landlord that involved them making the repairs and waiving the late payments."

Adam Weaver, Counsel - Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

"This case had been dragging on for a long time. Lario Albarran and I successfully negotiated a settlement at mediation, and the client recovered \$1,500 for the work the client had performed. This was a really good experience for us and an opportunity to develop negotiation skills because Lario and I had never been to a mediation before"

Emily Hoy, Associate, Locke Lord LLP

"Our negotiations helped the client get the dentures he initially purchased so that he can comfortably wear the dentures without adhesive."

Genia Coleman-Lee, Attorney at Law

PRO BONO PROVIDES COURTROOM/TRIAL EXPERIENCE

"I got hooked on doing pro bono work as a result of getting my first opportunity to be a first chair jury lawyer while still a very young lawyer..." **Alex Roberts, Partner – Beck Redden LLP**

"HVL has provided help to me that has allowed me to practice different skills as an attorney since most of my attorney work is transactional." **Veronica Lockett, Attorney - Travis County Mental Health Public Defender**

"The client can move on with her life without a criminal history and I got an opportunity to go to court."
Emily Hoy, Associate - Locke Lord LLP

PRO BONO IS A GREAT WAY TO TRY OUT NEW AREAS OF LAW

"The client was very grateful for our assistance, and I know Erin and I both learned a lot about family procedure, divorce and enjoyed being able to provide this assistance pro bono to a low income family allowing them to begin a new chapter of their lives."

Harriet Amelia Wessel, Associate and Erin Formby, Associate - Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP

"The experience was very rewarding, and I was able to learn more about probate law and estate administration."
Frank Amini, Ph.D., Partner - Shackelford, Bowen, McKinley & Norton, LLP

"I was able to successfully facilitate the client's divorce in accordance with his wishes. This has been a great learning experience for me."
Jessica Perry, Associate – Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP

PRO BONO WORK IS GOOD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

"I volunteer to assist with pro bono cases for my own mental health. It helps balance the stress from my paying clients."
Omonzusi Imobioh – Law Offices of Omonzusi Imobioh

"Helping the client and his mother with the guardianship impacted my life greatly as it reminded me why I wanted to work in this profession - to help people, especially those in disenfranchised communities."
Merari Zambrano - MEZ Law, PLLC

"Being able to help people in the community is indescribable. In this case we were able to get our client conservatorship over her grandchildren. This will make the client's life much easier."
Aaron M. Reimer, Partner – Jenkins & Kamin LLP

PRO BONO TEACHES YOU HOW TO BE A ZEALOUS ADVOCATE

"We did it! The Judge even smiled at us in the end when she said, "Divorce Granted"! The team went through the full prove-up hearing, featuring the Judge's own impromptu questions alongside the prepared script. We came out alive and smiling."
Stefan Koller, Associate Attorney – Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

"I helped the client defend herself against a bully ex-boyfriend who was trying to use their children to get back at her. She helped me remember there are positives in any situation."
Lauren L. Heyde, Associate, Jenkins & Kamin, LLP

"The Insurance Company refused coverage for my client's home after Hurricane Harvey destroyed her roof. After the Insurance Company attempted to remove the case improperly, I appealed the removal to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and won a favorable decision for my client. Shortly after, the Insurance Company settled the case."
Daniel Avila II, Attorney – Reed Smith LLP

"A divorce settlement was reached. I really enjoyed helping the client and felt like I was able to fulfill my duty as a lawyer in serving the public."
Lauren L. Heyde, Associate– Jenkins & Kamin LLP

"The settlement funds changed the client's life. This case will no doubt be the most meaningful case of my career."
Ryan Burns, Associate – Locke Lord LLP

These quotes have been edited for length and clarity.



CLIENTS *benefit...*

Navigating the justice system is not easy. Sometimes just getting to talk with an attorney is enough. Other times, having an attorney by your side levels the playing field in the courtroom. Like most of us, low-income clients will interact with the civil justice system at some point in their lives. Without the assistance of a pro bono attorney HVL clients would be at a disadvantage in the areas of the law that impact family stability, financial security, generational wealth, housing stability, and other basic civil legal matters.

The Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct state in the Preamble: A Lawyer's Responsibilities #6 that, "... personal involvement in the problems of the disadvantaged can be one of the most rewarding experiences in the life of a lawyer. Every lawyer, regardless of professional prominence or professional workload, should find time to participate in or otherwise support the provision of legal services to the disadvantaged. The provision of free legal services to those unable to pay reasonable fees is a moral obligation of each lawyer as well as the profession generally..."

PRO BONO WORK CHANGES LIVES

"These property filings permit the client to own her grandmother's home, thereby preserving the generational wealth that her grandmother built."

Johanna Smith, Associate Attorney – Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

"The client's sister had forged his name on a deed and transferred title to their mother's property to her name and was attempting to force the client to vacate the property (which was his residence). We successfully restored title to his name, so he will be able to remain at the residence."

Daniel McEntee, Counsel – Vinson & Elkins LLP

"The Client got a discharge of all of her debts and from the debts of people who took advantage of her."

Ashley Barill Smith – Brann Sullivan Trial Lawyers, P.L.L.C.

"The client and his father were very thankful for my help. The client is in college at University of Houston and is happy his record will not hold him back."

Xperanza Uviedo, Associate – Shipley Snell Montgomery LLP.

"I have helped her gain her freedom from her abusive husband."

Kesha Amos, Attorney – Attorney at Law

"Establishing guardianship enabled the parents to continue to make decisions for their son with cerebral palsy and other developmental issues."

Claude Treece, Partner – Foley & Lardner LLP and Ariel M. Harris, Attorney at Law

"The client had her day in court and won, proving that she was defrauded by a man in the community who publicly claimed that she was lying. It proved a point of reputation and pride for her."

Cara Vasquez, Associate and Mark Waite, Partner – DLA Piper

"The children now have a legal person to take care of them after the death of their mother and father."

Ken D. Kuykendall, Of Counsel – Royston Rayzor

"We were able to recover a much needed refund of \$3,927 for their family and it was a very rewarding experience to help people who not only struggle to navigate the US tax system while doing their utmost to comply, but for whom English is a second language."

Harriet Amelia Wessel, Associate - Norton Rose Fulbright and Viki Vozarova, Associate, Norton Rose Fulbright

"The client asked for help with a divorce. While working on the divorce, the pro bono attorney spotted the need for a will and estate planning. A second pro bono worked expeditiously to complete the documents. At the Will Execution ceremony, the client arrived with a portable oxygen tank and informed his attorney that his doctor told him that he had perhaps 90 days left. The client's divorce was finalized, and he was relieved to complete his end-of-life planning documents, even finding a home for his dog. He brought gifts and cards for all his attorneys to the Will signing. The client died shortly after. We are all sad, but HVL enabled him to die knowing that his wishes would be honored."

Benjamin Lefler, Associate Attorney – Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

"My client was extremely grateful for the legal assistance in finalizing his estate planning needs. He is an elderly man with children, and it was clear that he wanted to establish straightforward plans for his children. I felt honored to have helped him and felt good about being able to give back to the community. It also made me encourage my own parents to get their estate planning in order."

Sabrina Lyon, - Hewlett Packard Enterprise

PRO BONO WORK HELPS CLIENTS GET EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE

"The client should now be able to get a Texas CDL driver's license and pursue his desired career. It was a very difficult process to get the name change (even with a legal education) and I have a sense now of how hard it can be to "get into the system" if you ever fall out."

Nathan Wolcott, Associate, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

"We helped the client along in the process of the divorce and assisted in getting the child support she needs. She did not have to go through these hearings alone."

Tomi Olutoye, Associate and Matthew Nadworny, Partner - Kirkland & Ellis LLP

"Being able to provide someone with peace of mind with respect to their affairs late in their life is an invaluable role that lawyers and other legal professionals play. I was thankful to have been able to assist this client."

Rishi Varma, SVP & General Counsel – Hewlett Packard Enterprise

These quotes have been edited for length and clarity.



WHEN PRO BONO ATTORNEYS HELP CLIENTS THROUGH HVL, THE GREATER HOUSTON AREA *benefits...*

HVL is proud to be the largest provider of pro bono services in Texas. HVL plays the pivotal role in bridging the legal gap between the multitude of low-income clients who need legal assistance and the dedicated volunteer attorneys who donate thousands of hours providing that free legal assistance.

HVL staff works with clients to assess each one for eligibility and to help identify their legal needs. An HVL attorney interviews each client before making a case available for pro bono representation. HVL attorneys provide ongoing support to the pro bono attorney especially in legal matters that are outside the volunteer's normal area of practice.

As a result of this collaborative process, equal access to justice has been provided to many. And that benefits us all!

HVL SUPPORTS PRO BONO ATTORNEYS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

"HVL provided me with a ton of support. The people from HVL were available almost 24/7...they filled in all the gaps for us." **Paige Dusthimer, Associate – Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP**

"The staff of HVL met me at the client's home to act as witnesses for the Will execution. The client was very thankful."

Veronica F. Jacobs, Attorney

"I was assigned a staff attorney from HVL who was able to answer any questions that I had. In one instance, HVL guided me in how to provide translation services..." **Emma K. Sadjak, Associate – Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP**

"Documents had to be executed quickly due to the declining health of client. HVL staff acted as witnesses. Were it not for the quick thinking and actions of the HVL attorneys, the expeditious completion of the case would not have been possible."

Dianne Zomper, Attorney – Attorney at Law

HVL SUPPORTS CLIENTS AS THEY FACE LEGAL ISSUES

"The day I came to your office, I was very desperate, and I felt very alone and your presence, your action of going above and beyond to get a volunteer lawyer to support me, gave me hope in humanity.

I am very grateful for you having answered all my calls and with patience and tolerance and on top of all sympathy. You answered all my doubts and concerns. Without your support I could not have gone through this phase. I thank God that there are people like you in this world, that give me hope for the future."

Client

"Muchas gracias por toda su ayuda, le invito a que siga realizando tan importante labor!

Es usted la mejor! Esperamos poder ayudar en un futuro! Recuerde que siempre estaremos agradecidos! Dios le bendiga!!!"

Translation – "Thank you so much for your help. I hope you keep doing such important work. You are the best! We hope to be able to help you in the future! Remember that we will always appreciate you! May God bless you!!"

Thank you note from her pro bono client received by Susan H. Soto, Attorney – Coane and Associate, PLLC

"I think what surprises you the most is how little effort it takes to really make an impact on your client's livelihood or their life or whatever the problem is that they are facing... Sometimes, what they need is somebody to listen carefully and to give them some straight answers. And they get that at HVL."

Alex Roberts, Partner – Beck Redden LLP

These quotes have been edited for length and clarity.



IT TAKES A *village...*



Achieving equal access to justice for all is a huge challenge. Every hour donated by attorneys, paralegals, law students, and others helps bridge the legal gap. Houston Volunteer Lawyers and the thousands of clients served appreciate every volunteer. An extra thanks goes to those volunteers and firms who went above and beyond in 2022-2023 to provide equal access to justice for close to 5,000 clients.

HUNTON
ANDREWS KURTH

**"MOST LIKELY TO INCREASE
HVL CAPACITY BY PROVIDING
A PAID FELLOW"**
Hunton Andrews Kurth



**"MOST LIKELY TO TRY CASES
IN NEW AREAS OF THE LAW"**
Jeremy Northum,
Northum Law



**"MOST LIKELY TO KEEP
DOING PRO BONO WORK
AFTER RETIREMENT"**
John Warren,
Attorney at Law

GIBSON DUNN

**"MOST LIKELY TO QUADRUPLE
THEIR EJC COMMITMENT"**
Gibson, Dunn &
Crutcher LLP



**"MOST LIKELY TO
REPRESENT SURVIVORS
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE"**
Lauren Brogdon,
Haynes & Boone



**"MOST LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE
COLLEAGUES TO VOLUNTEER"**
Pete Lowy, Chamberlain Hrdlicka



**"MOST LIKELY TO
TAKE GUARDIANSHIP
CASES IN FORT BEND COUNTY"**
Taylor Hood, McDermott
Will & Emery LLP



**"MOST LIKELY TO OUTMANEUVER
THE OPPOSING COUNSEL"**
John Weigel, Attorney at Law



**"MOST LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER
AT EVERY LEGALLINE"**
Alix Udelson, Blank Rome LLP
and Re'Necia Sherald,
Haynes & Boone LLP



**"MOST LIKELY TO TAKE
FAMILY LAW CASES"**
Elizabeth Pagel, Attorney at Law



**"MOST LIKELY TO DO WHATEVER
IT TAKES TO CONNECT WITH
THEIR CLIENTS"**
Nancy Falgout, Javier N.
Maldonado & Associates, P. C.



**"MOST LIKELY TO BRING A FRIEND TO
VOLUNTEER FOR LEGALLINE"**
Abby Prithivi, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich



**"MOST LIKELY TO
NEVER GIVE UP"**
Laura Shoemaker McGonagill
and Liz Furlow Malpass,
Baker Botts

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2022-2023 HOUSTON BAR FOUNDATION CHAIR

It was my privilege to serve as the Chair of the Houston Bar Foundation for the 2022-2023 Bar year. In this role, I am proud to report that the Houston Bar Foundation granted at least \$1.1 million to Houston Volunteer Lawyers to support its programs in 2023.

I want to thank every law firm, corporate legal department, and solo practitioner who supports the Harvest Celebration. In 2022, more than 1,000 attorneys and guests gathered at the River Oaks Country Club to enjoy food, fellowship, and fun with colleagues. I had the honor to serve as Co-Chair of the event, along with Chris Popov, HBA's President and David Harrell, HBA's Treasurer and HVL's Board Chair. While we were having fun, we were raising



critical funds for Houston Volunteer Lawyers. HBF provides about one-third of HVL's funding each year. The funds provided by HBF allow HVL to serve clients who would otherwise be denied legal assistance based on restrictions from its other funders. HBF funds make it possible for HVL to serve non-citizens, an increased number of veterans and military families, the working poor, and others who would fall between the cracks. HBF's funds help HVL distinguish itself from other legal services providers and serve these clients that would otherwise be denied services.

A question frequently asked is why does the Houston Volunteer Lawyers organization need money if pro bono attorneys provide the legal services? It is a good question that has an excellent answer. During the calendar year 2022, pro bono time was valued at more than \$12 million and legal assistance was provided to almost 5,000 clients. How many of those clients would have been served without Houston Volunteer Lawyers in place to vet each applicant, run eligibility checks for each applicant, conduct an initial interview with each client that ultimately is made available for pro bono assistance, schedule weekly remote advice clinics, prep each clinic volunteer with the legal information needed to provide accurate legal advice, provide mentorship to pro bono attorneys who are representing a client in a legal area outside his/her normal area of practice, and all the other things that the HVL staff does to make our volunteer service effective and efficient? The provision of legal services is a partnership. HVL's role is critical so that Houston area attorneys can fulfill their pro bono duties and HBF's funds help make that possible.

Thank you for your support in the 2022-2023 Bar year. I know you will continue to provide your support as together we strive to promote equal access to justice for all.

Christian A. Garza
Chair, 2022-2023
Houston Bar Foundation

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2022-2023 HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

I am proud to report to you as the Houston Bar Association President for the 2022-2023 Bar year. Having served as the Chair of the HVL Board of Directors in 2020–2021, it is with special pride that I now write about how we sought to shine a light on HVL and enhance HVL’s effectiveness in providing access to justice during my Presidential Bar Year and how HVL answered that call.

The Houston Volunteer Lawyers placed over 800 cases for extended representation with pro bono attorneys and provided nearly 4,500 cases of pro se assistance and short turnaround advice. There are many ways to measure the value of that service, but when quantified in terms of billable hours, our members donated \$12.6 million in legal services through HVL to the people

who cannot afford a lawyer. That’s almost a 50% increase over the prior year, and about three times the average contribution over the prior five years.

In addition, new partnerships are being formed that bring different types of legal issues including expungement and record sealing. With in-person contact back in place, the need to help with wills and estate planning and veterans cases is on the rise. In 2023, Houston Volunteer Lawyers answered a community need and broadened its legal issues to include immigration services starting with naturalization. Attorneys are responding and stepping up to assist in these areas.

We said goodbye to Anne Chandler this spring. The state of the agency upon her exit is strong. The organizational structure is secure thanks to the changes she implemented. The mission has been reaffirmed to promote equal access to justice for those unable to afford an attorney. The service delivery model is focused on providing pro bono legal services to clients. Funding, always a challenge for non-profit organizations, is stable, for now.

I was thrilled to welcome Jessica Howton Stool to Houston Volunteer Lawyers as its new Executive Director. She brings a wealth of experience in pro bono work and a fresh set of eyes to help with the continued growth of pro bono legal services at HVL.

Thanks again for a great year as President of the Houston Bar Association. I look forward to staying involved with HVL and thank you for including pro bono as a part of your practice. We all benefit.

Chris Popov

President, 2022-2023

Houston Bar Association



EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE CHAMPIONS

To be recognized as an Equal Access to Justice Champion, law firms, corporate legal departments, and solo practitioners agree to take one pro bono case per year for every five attorneys in their Houston office. During the 2022-2023 Bar year, several participating Champions doubled, tripled, and even delivered tenfold on their pledges resulting in the Equal Access to Justice Champions ending the year at 107% of goal. HVL thanks each of the more than 60 Equal Access to Justice Champions listed here.

CORPORATE LEGAL DEPARTMENTS

CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
Chevron U.S.A. Inc.
Exxon Mobil Corporation
Halliburton Energy
LyondellBasell Industries
Shell Oil Company

LARGE LAW FIRMS

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
Baker Botts L.L.P.
BakerHostetler LLP
Blank Rome LLP
Bracewell LLP
Chamberlain Hrdlicka
Dentons US LLP
Evershed Sutherland US LLP
Foley Lardner
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
Gray Reed
Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Haynes and Boone, LLP
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP
Jackson Walker LLP
King & Spalding LLP
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Locke Lord LLP
Morgan Lewis
Norton Rose Fulbright
O'Melveny & Myers LLP

ReedSmith LLP
Sidley Austin
Squire Patton Boggs
Vinson & Elkins LLP
Winstead PC
Winston & Strawn LLP
Yetter Coleman LLP

MID-SIZE LAW FIRMS

McDowell & Hetherington LLP

BOUTIQUE LAW FIRMS

Beck Redden LLP
Gibbs & Bruns LLP
Royston, Razor, Vickery & Williams, L.L.P.
Weycer, Kaplan, Pulaski & Zuber, P.C.
Wilson, Cribbs, & Goren, P.C.

SMALL LAW FIRMS

Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Agosto, Aziz & Stogner
Balch & Bingham LLP
Coane & Associates
Jenkins & Kamin, LLP
Painter Law Firm PLLC
Shipleigh Snell Montgomery LLP
Sorrels Law

SOLO LAW FIRMS AND PRACTITIONERS

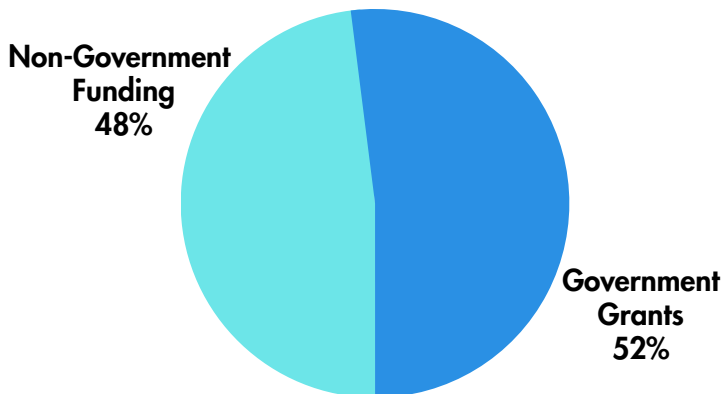
Angela Solice, Attorney at Law
Archie Law PLLC
Elizabeth S. Pagel, PLLC
Fleurinord Law PLLC
Frye and Benavidez, PLLC
Fuqua & Associates, PC
Hasley Scarano L.L.P.
Jeremy Northum, Attorney at Law
Law Office of Cindi L. Rickman
Law Office of Norma Levine Trusch
Law Office of Robert E. Price
Law Offices of Omonzusi Imobioh
Limbaga Law
Martin R.G. Marasigan Law Offices
McGarvey PLLC
Sanchez Law Firm
Shortt & Nguyen, P.C.
The Ericksen Law Firm
The Jurek Law Group, PLLC
Travis Bryan Law Group, PLLC

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial review is from the latest audited financial statements covering the period of January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. [View the full audit.](#)

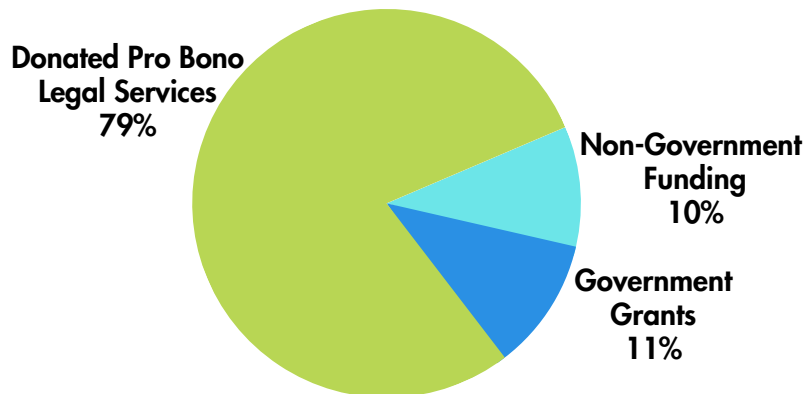
Total Revenue = \$3,454,489

(Without value of pro bono services included)



Total Revenue = \$16,142,706

(With value of pro bono services included)

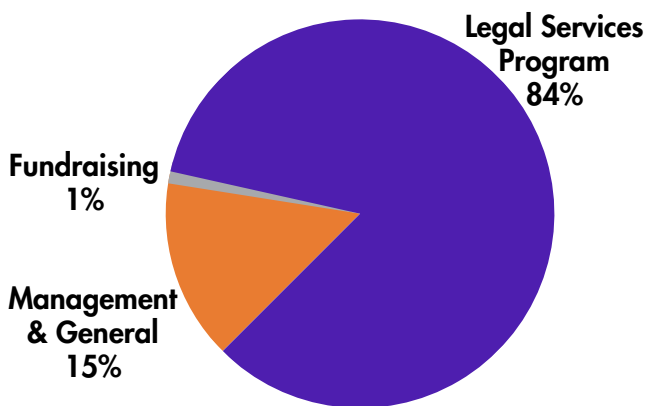


We thank the pro bono attorneys who not only donate their time and expertise, but also report their pro bono hours to Houston Volunteer Lawyers. In 2022, every dollar donated to Houston Volunteer Lawyers was quadrupled into \$4.67 of impact provided by the in-kind value of time given by pro bono attorneys providing legal services.

A donation to Houston Volunteer Lawyers is a great return on investment.

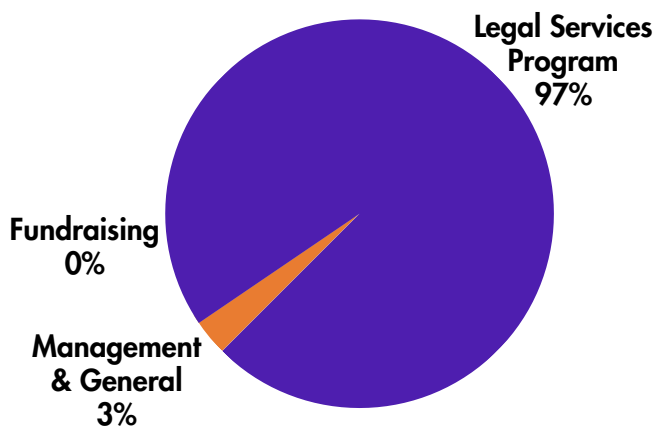
Total Expenses = \$3,043,258

(Without value of pro bono services included)



Total Expenses = \$15,731,475

(With value of pro bono services included)



When including the value of pro bono services as an expense, 97% of total expenditures are used to deliver legal services. That means of every \$1.00 donated to Houston Volunteer Lawyers, 97¢ go to providing free legal assistance as we promote equal access to justice!



HOUSTON
VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS

A SERVICE OF THE HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

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Houston, TX 77002

713.228.0735
www.makejusticehappen.org