



A Message from our Board President, Ray Brady

I am honored to serve as the President of the Board of Three Rivers Legal Services, and to have the opportunity to work with these champions of justice for the members of our community who otherwise could not afford legal services.

As you read the reports and stories in this Annual Report, you will be impressed by the amazing efforts of the attorneys, staff, and volunteers of Three Rivers. The impact of their work is enormous. The results they achieve can be life-changing for the individual or family involved. Results such as achieving

eligibility for disability or veterans benefits, eligibility for medical care, awards of child support or alimony, relief from tax debts, or home ownership through probate or foreclosure defense. In terms of dollar amounts, in 2015 nearly \$1.7 million was recovered on behalf of indigent clients.

We could not be more proud of the work accomplished by Three Rivers, often against daunting odds, including tight budgets, hard-to-reach clients and large caseloads. Yet it is important to recognize that in spite of all of the efforts of our advocates, still only about 20% of the civil legal needs of the poor are being met.

As President of the Board, I encourage you to take note of the accomplishments of this program. Bear in mind, however, that the ongoing funding crisis creates a stress on program resources and the ability to provide much needed services. We need, and very much appreciate, your continued support!

A Message from Executive Director, Christine Larson

Dear Friends,

As another year of service ends, we are happy to celebrate with you the many accomplishments and collaborative efforts of 2015. We have a lot to celebrate. Here are just a few of those achievements:

1. We expanded services to clients, closing 4,620 cases, a 20% increase over 2014. We also recovered more than \$1,688,638 in cumulative benefits for clients, a 21% increase over 2014.
2. Together with the Eighth Judicial Circuit Bar Association and other community partners, we helped to plan and execute a successful ongoing pro bono project for persons experiencing homelessness in Gainesville.
3. We initiated and planned our first collaborative gala fund raising event, featuring accounts of the legal struggle for reparations for the survivors of the Rosewood massacre.
4. We completed initial work on our technology project, which makes civil legal information available at local public libraries in rural areas.
5. We expanded our services to veterans by being selected to receive an Equal Justice Works fellow for our Jacksonville office.
6. With new state funds, we were able to make our homelessness advocate position full-time, expanding services to that population. Our advocate also created a digital home storage project, which hosts document storage drives to assist participants in maintaining a safe and secure space for their important documents and records.

There is so much more we could share. I am humbled by all of these efforts, and so grateful to be a part of the Three Rivers Legal Services team. However, we would have achieved little without the hard work, unwavering support, and kind encouragement of our Board, staff, volunteers, local bar associations, funders, and other partners. Thank you for all that you do to help ensure justice for all in our community. We appreciate your support.



Civil Legal Aid Since 1978

Three Rivers Legal Services, Inc. 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

~ Martin Luther King Jr.

Cumulative Benefit Amounts Recovered in 2015

Tax Relief	\$251,637
Social Security	\$648,495
Unemployment and Other Public Benefits	\$95,752
Alimony and Child Support	\$235,819
Debt Relief	\$39,601
Assets obtained in Probate	\$417,334
Total	\$1,688,638

Specific Services Delivered to Veterans and Others from January to December of 2015

We assisted 626 veterans with their civil legal needs. We also provided information at 28 veterans' outreach events, to more than 800 veterans, across our service area.

Our services kept individuals from potential homelessness through representation in obtaining benefits, and prevention of evictions and foreclosures. We also helped keep families safe by providing representation to domestic violence survivors seeking injunctions for protection.



Staff Attorney Tom DePeter making a presentation

Staff attorneys Lisette DeLeon & Chardea Murray answering low income tax questions on PURE Radio.



Volunteer attorneys at Ask-A-Lawyer event

Preventing Foreclosure

TD, a disabled veteran, came to us with an answer due in a foreclosure case. She had refinanced her home and fallen behind in her mortgage payments due to illness that had her in and out of the hospital. We assisted her with a pro se answer, which allowed time to enter into a modification with the lender. The foreclosure was dismissed and she is able to remain in her home.

Safety for Victims of Domestic Violence

ML and her 4-year-old son were the victims of domestic violence at the hands of her husband, the child's father. Her husband beat the child and tried to suffocate ML. ML's husband tried to dissolve the permanent injunction and sought unsupervised visitation with the child. Our advocate represented ML in both the domestic violence and dissolution of marriage hearings, prepared witnesses and evidence, and presented both cases with the safety of the child as the primary focus. The Court awarded the protection needed, supervised visitation with the child and batterer's intervention treatment for the husband.

Obtaining Disability Benefits

We met MW at a homeless shelter; he had been unable to work for years due to an accident which left him unable to

use his left hand, and with a serious limp and constant pain. He had previously applied for and been denied disability benefits. Three Rivers assisted him in filing a new application for benefits, gathered his medical benefits and advocated on his behalf with the Social Security Administration. Within two months, he was approved for benefits, received a retroactive award of almost \$3,000, and secured a furnished room in which to live and medical care for his injuries.

Financial Stability for a Veteran

JL, age 72, is an army veteran. When he came to our office, he had not been able to work for many years due to various physical problems. He had previously been awarded a 30% service-connected disability due to foot problems. Other injuries to his legs, however, had gotten progressively worse and we represented him in filing a claim with the Veterans Administration for an increased disability rating. As a result of our advocacy, his disability ratings were increased and he was awarded 100% disability. With this increased rating, he became eligible for VA unemployment benefits, and we assisted him in filing such a claim. He was finally approved and now receives nearly \$3,000 per month in benefits for himself and his family, resulting in greater financial stability.

THREE RIVERS LEGAL SERVICES A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Three Rivers Legal Services, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit corporation serving North Florida since 1978. TRLS provides free civil legal assistance to indigent families and veterans in seventeen counties with three offices and a staff of 38, including 21 full time attorneys. We also provide legal information and education to low income persons and groups. Our offices are located in Jacksonville, Gainesville and Lake City. Each office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM, and the offices serve residents from all of the counties listed here. Applicants can access services through a toll free hotline number or they can come in-person to one of the three offices.



Rosewood Fundraising Event Backdrop

Specific Services Delivered from January to December of 2015

Our firm closed 4,620 cases for low income families in 2015. That total consisted of assistance to 6,440 adults and 4,700 children. We provided free legal information and educational materials on a wide range of topics to more than 4,000 people at 143 outreach events throughout our 17 county service area.

Below is a breakdown of the types of services provided to individuals, throughout our service area, from January to December of 2015:

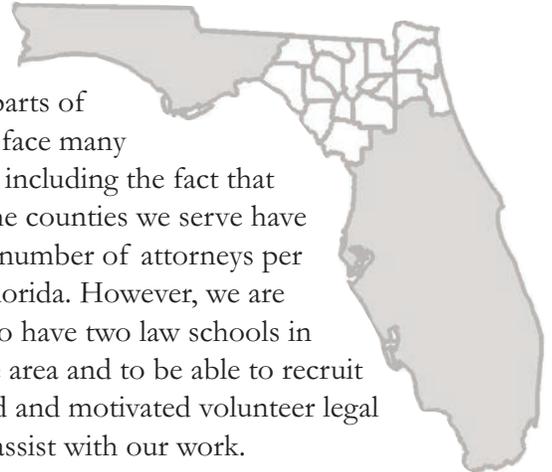
Legal Issue	Number of cases closed for each issue
Consumer	453
Education	58
Employment and Tax	211
Family Law, includes victims of Domestic Violence	1550
Housing, includes evictions and foreclosures	1270
Public Benefits	468
Civil Rights	251
Other, includes Wills, Powers of Attorney, Probate, etc.	359

Serving 17 Counties in North Florida

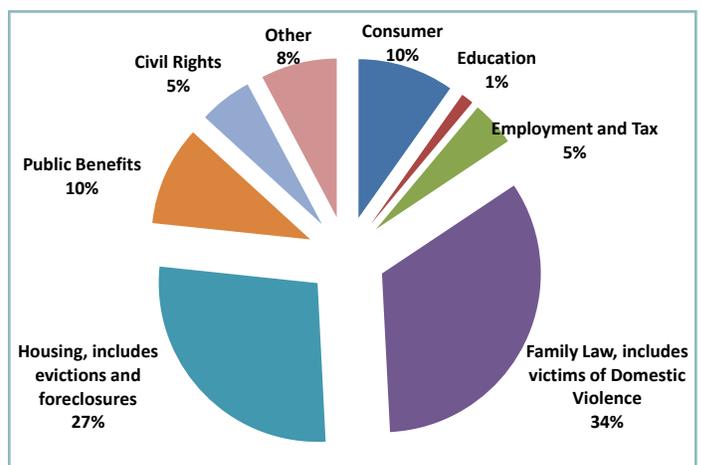
**ALACHUA • BAKER • BRADFORD • CLAY
COLUMBIA • DIXIE • DUVAL • GILCHRIST
HAMILTON • LAFAYETTE • LEVY
MADISON • NASSAU • ST. JOHNS
SUWANNEE • TAYLOR • UNION**

This service area covers more than 11,000 square miles. Within this area, there are approximately 315,000 individuals living in poverty.

The rural parts of our region face many challenges, including the fact that many of the counties we serve have the lowest number of attorneys per capita in Florida. However, we are fortunate to have two law schools in our service area and to be able to recruit well trained and motivated volunteer legal interns to assist with our work.



Managing Attorney Gloria Walker with Board Member Tom Stone; Pro Bono Coordinator Marcia Green with Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Jorge Labarga



Three Rivers Legal Services, Inc. is a non-profit law firm dedicated to the provision of quality legal assistance to the poor, abused, disabled and neglected, and to empowerment through preventive legal education.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Three Rivers Legal Services, Inc. is guided by a 15 member Board of Directors. Five board members represent low-income client groups or are low-income clients themselves. The other members are attorneys recommended by local bar associations and one community representative.

Raymond Brady, Esq.
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Bill Salmon, Esq.
Vice-President

Leslie Scott Jean-Bart, Esq.
Secretary

Nkwanda Jah
Treasurer

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Eunice Barnum

Lisa Ann Dasher, Esq.

Paula Everett

Leslie Haswell, Esq.

Ana Johnson, Esq.

Thelma Johnson

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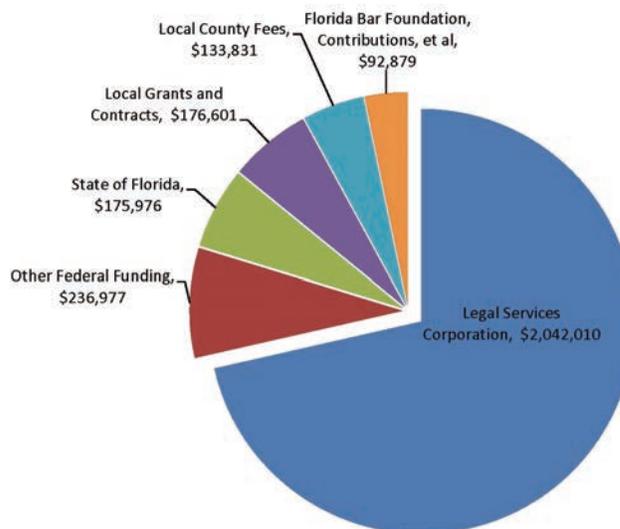
Mittie McRae

Elizabeth Rosado, Esq.

Thomas Stone, Esq.

FUNDING FOR THREE RIVERS LEGAL SERVICES

The Legal Services Corporation
 The Florida Bar Foundation
 Office of the Florida Attorney General
 Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
 Department of Children & Families
 Equal Justice Works - AmeriCorps
 Internal Revenue Service
 United Way of North Central Florida
 United Way of Suwannee Valley
 Santa Fe College
 USDA Rural Development
 City of Gainesville CDBG
 HUD Continuum of Care
 University of Florida Community Campaign
 Alachua County Community Agency Partnership Program
 Supportive Services for Veteran's Families with
 Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Volunteers of America,
 Family Endeavors & Changing Homelessness
 County Commissions of Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Columbia,
 Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, Madison, Suwannee, & Union Counties
 Elder Options in Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist,
 Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Suwannee & Union Counties



2015 Sources of Support

Three Rivers Legal Services is very grateful to the attorneys and other advocates in our community who have provided services, made donations and otherwise supported Three Rivers Legal Services in achieving our mission. We are humbled by the good deeds of our legal community and the volunteers who help us accomplish so much more than we could do on our own. Our program and our clients are reliant on the generosity of those who have volunteered their time, shared their expertise and/or made donations to our program in the past year. The low income residents of our community need access to our civil legal system and we are grateful to those who recognize this and help make so much possible.