



2016 ANNUAL REPORT



**COMMUNITY
LAW CENTER**

LAWYERS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS AND NONPROFITS

30TH ANNIVERSARY

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

Thanks to your generous support, Community Law Center has been serving the legal needs of neighborhoods and nonprofits for 30 years!

Community Law Center was founded in 1986 by a group of lawyers and community organizers who saw the need for residents in Baltimore City to band together and advocate effectively for their neighborhoods. We are proud to have stayed true to our mission to provide legal services to community and nonprofit organizations throughout Maryland to promote stronger nonprofits and more vibrant neighborhoods. We remain Maryland's only legal services organization dedicated solely to strengthening neighborhoods and the nonprofit sector.

Community Law Center provides free legal services to groups and organizations in Maryland working to make positive change in their communities. We receive dozens of inquiries each week and on average one completed application for services every day. These legal services are provided by Community Law Center staff attorneys and by our panel of over 500 volunteer attorneys. In addition to strengthening nonprofits' capacity and neighborhoods' ability to have their voices heard, the goal is to use advocacy and the law to achieve meaningful solutions to complex daily problems such as abandoned properties, nuisance liquor establishments, illegal dumping and other environmental hazards.

In addition to addressing specific legal issues for clients, we also delve into systemic problems in need of reform. In 2016, these broader issues impacting many of our clients included:

- **Strategies to reduce the number and impact of vacant properties** to include developing a new legal remedy to combat vacant properties, reforming the Baltimore City tax sale, creating a new integrated user-friendly mapping and data tool for advocates, supporting the creation of a city-wide community coalition to organize around vacants, and providing the necessary legal assistance to redevelop vacant properties;
- **Reforming the Baltimore City Liquor Board** to bring transparency and accountability to this agency that has historically been opaque and unaccountable so that it will better serve to protect the general health, safety and welfare of city neighborhoods;
- **Strengthening and empowering Baltimore City's community associations** through monthly workshops for nonprofits and community leaders, semi-annual community leadership capacity building training series, and semi-annual brief advice legal clinics for nonprofits.

Looking forward to the next 30 years, your support remains critical. On behalf of our Board, staff, and clients, we thank you for the role you have played over the past year, and we hope you will continue to support our work.

Sincerely,



Kristine Dunkerton, Esq.
Executive Director



Dave Ryan, CPA, JD
Chairperson, Board of Directors

PRO BONO ATTORNEYS

The Pro Bono Program matches our panel of over 500 volunteer attorneys with community and nonprofit organizations throughout Maryland to provide the legal assistance they need to achieve their missions. Volunteer attorneys handle the complex legal matters faced by communities and nonprofits that would otherwise be unable to afford the legal assistance needed to get started, protect their legal rights, and achieve their missions.

The following attorneys provided free legal services in 2016:

Glen Allen	Christopher Heagy	Vasilios Peros
Stanley Alpert	Sharon Heaton	Uyen Pham
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Michael Floissac	Darren Margolis	Kate Titford
Brendan Fox	Damian Mark	Patrick Turley
Barbara Francis	Erica McWhorter	Davin Van Eyken
Érica Franzetti	Daniel Mendelsohn	Megan Wakefield
Christopher Fritz	Penny Minna	Amanda Webster
Colin Gaynor	Razvan Miutescu	Alana Williams
Dorcas Gilmore	Eileen Morgan Johnson	Steven Willner
Therese Goldsmith	Patricia Morrison	Michelle Winbush
Kevin Gralley	Nicole Musgrave-Burdette	Jessica Woods
Elizabeth Handelsman	Chika Ojiaku	Emily Zhao
Renee Hatcher	William Paxton	Yosef Ziffer

30 Years
of Community Law Center

1987



Opened the Community Law Center office to the public on May 1, 1987 to provide legal services to help public interest organizations set started, address complex legal issues, and to offer educational programs to nonprofit organizations and leaders of disinvested neighborhoods.

1991-92



Advanced a new weapon for renovating vacant houses with a Baltimore City Circuit Court victory in which a receiver was ordered to oversee a vacant property owner's repair of housing code violations.

1996



Initiated the
“Community Bill of
Rights” legislation
enacted to allow
community associations
to seek enforcement
of housing, building,
zoning and health
codes.

1998-99

Pirate phones thrive as city frets over law

■ **Baltimore:** *Rescued of illegal pay phones at West Baltimore drag cover shows problem can be attacked.*

IT SOUNDS like a joke, but Public Works Director George G. Balog is serious. He wants to lure students to carnivals Baltimore neighborhood to count the number of illegal pay phones. "That's one of our ideas," he said at

At the hearing, DPW officials contended the phone had been turned off. Councilman Martin O'Malley said it was working but he closed that morning. The DPW said the illegal phone will be disconnected by the Pub Service Commission in four days.

This was not quick enough for Mr. O'Malley, who noted that "nothing prevents" the phone from reboining a city ordinance.

Argued the first drug nuisance abatement case in Baltimore City which resulted in the eviction of a drug dealer from a property that he owned. Attorneys also attacked open-air drug markets in the city by forcing the removal of hundreds of illegal payphones routinely used in the drug trade.

2001-02



Created an initiative to focus on Environmental Justice to give communities a voice in land use decisions impacting neighborhoods, as well as environmental contamination threatening health and safety.

1986



After three years of planning and organizing, a tax-exempt, charitable organization was formed and received initial funding to hire Anne Blumenberg as Executive Director to match a network of volunteer lawyers with small nonprofit organizations in Baltimore.

1988-89



Developed legal strategies, organizing tactics, and organizational and statutory infrastructure for enabling community associations to identify and document nuisance properties and prepare to file suits directly to clean up or acquire nuisance properties.

1993-95



Filed the first drug nuisance abatement case and developed a self-help nuisance abatement strategy to allow communities to board up vacant houses. Began to provide legal services to support communities with anti-crime efforts. In its first year, violent crime is reduced from 25–56% in communities represented by CLC.

1997



Focused anti-crime and vacant house reduction strategies in Patterson Park communities, initiating over 70 drug nuisance abatement cases in its first year. This strategy, with many partners, proved successful in creating a “neighborhood of choice.”

2000



Established the Project to End Predatory and Deceptive Real Estate Practices to conduct research and analysis designed to curb illegal and unethical property transactions after recognizing that the high rates of vacancy and foreclosure in the city were largely the result of property scams and mortgage fraud.

2003



Uncovered unscrupulous practices by national mortgage servicers and sparked HUD investigation making nationwide and industry-wide changes to the industry to better protect consumers from losing their home to foreclosure.

2004



Created the Real Estate Services Project to focus on vacant property acquisition and renovation in Baltimore.

2005-07



Led city-wide effort to remove "We Buy Houses" signs from city streets leading to the removal of over 1,200 illegally posted signs. Established an Enforcement Committee of the Baltimore Homeownership Preservation Coalition to focus attention on the need to better regulate and enforce the banking and real estate industry in Maryland.

2008-09



Educated community leaders and volunteer attorneys with the start of a regular workshop series on topics to help neighborhood leaders understand their rights.

2010



Developed a legal focus on Equitable Development and began a dialog with community groups, government, private developers, and others about the importance of including neighborhood residents as stakeholders in developments.

2011



Pro Bono Program grew exponentially, more than doubling the amount of volunteer time in past years. The program continues growth into 2016.

2012



Urban Agriculture Law Project was developed to update laws and regulations to make Baltimore City a leader in allowing for growing food, beekeeping and raising animals.

2013



Created Booze News, a blog to bring transparency to the city Liquor Board. By 2016, over 200 articles were written about our posts and the blog received 3 Best of Baltimore awards. We also demanded, and obtained, higher standards for Liquor Board Commissioner appointments.

2014



Expanded the five-part Community Capacity Building series, a continuing education program for community leaders.

2016



Spearheaded the creation of a city-wide community association, Baltimore RENEW, to use the grassroots power of a bold alliance uniting Baltimore City residents, community associations and business owners to eliminate nuisance, vacant properties.

2015



Successfully argued a four year, ground-breaking lawsuit utilizing the Community Bill of Rights against Baltimore's biggest speculator in vacant properties.

FINANCIALS

Revenues, gains and other support:

Public support received directly:

Contributions	\$354,305
Contributed professional fees	\$811,759

\$1,166,064

Special events	\$1,293
Grants from governmental agencies	\$197,330

Other revenue:

Fees	\$17,938
Miscellaneous	\$1,771

\$19,709

Total revenues, gains and other support

\$1,384,396

Expenses:

Program services –

Legal assistance to communities & nonprofits	\$1,305,635
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Supporting services:

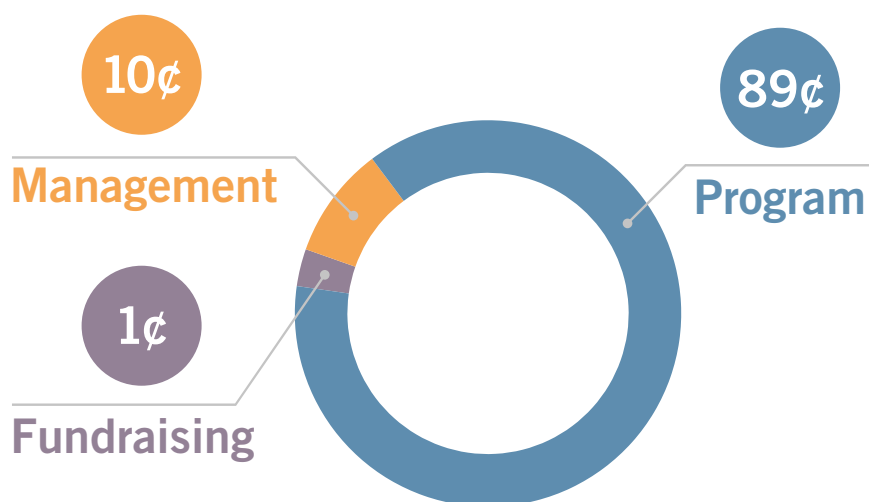
Management and General	\$147,769
Fund raising	\$17,407

Total supporting services	\$165,176
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Total expenses \$1,470,811

Change in net assets	(86,415)
Net assets – beginning of year	\$298,439
Net assets – end of year	\$212,024

FOR EVERY DOLLAR SPENT, 89% GOES DIRECTLY TO PROGRAMS.



**PRO BONO
PROGRAM 2016**

**2,054 HOURS
VALUED AT
\$811,759**

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