

LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE ELDERLY

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



CHAMPIONING THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS
OF SENIORS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

LEGAL
COUNSEL
for the
ELDERLY



MESSAGE FROM

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AND THE BOARD CHAIR



Jan Allen May, Esq.
LCE Executive Director



Peter R. Kolker, Esq.
Board Chair

AN EXCEPTIONAL YEAR

2017 was a year of expansion and growth for Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE). We are proud to highlight here a few of the ways that LCE has grown in the past year to better serve our client community.

We helped more clients than ever before, handling over 6,500 cases and garnering more benefits than any time in our 42-year history, \$18,586,685.05 to be exact. According to our client satisfaction survey, nearly 9 out of 10 clients responded that they would recommend our services to a family member or friend.

The Office of the D.C. Long-term Care Ombudsman resolved over 90% of the complaints brought to them by or on behalf of residents of long-term care facilities, in addition to participating in 150 events to support resident and family councils within the facilities. The Senior Medicare Patrol Project continued to grow its impressive

and robust community education program averaging over 20 events per month in what must be the most extensive community legal education project in the city.

In the housing area, our efforts to secure legal help for tenants resulted in an expansion of the right-to-counsel program where we represented hundreds of clients, initiated multiple systemic projects, drafted a manual for lawyers, and produced educational flyers for the client community.

LCE's consumer unit played a pivotal role in the judicial foreclosure process in D.C., identifying vulnerable clients, handling both individual cases and cutting edge systemic issues and serving as a key "friend of the court" on a regular basis.

The public benefits unit expanded in 2017 to include a full-time advocate to assist veterans with their claims and continued

to pursue remedies in the Medicaid area with multiple successes for clients in the Elderly and Persons with Disability Waiver Program allowing individuals to remain in their own homes and not be institutionalized.

Our accomplishments in 2017 have been great. But there is much more to do. With your help and support, we can look to an even brighter future as we continue to champion the dignity and rights of older D.C. residents.



“I might have to quit my job. I can’t leave her here by herself.”

Ms. M’s son. His mother faced losing her home healthcare aide.

MISSION

Legal Counsel for the Elderly helps low-income, older D.C. residents

by: stopping home foreclosures and evictions, preserving and promoting affordable housing, representing seniors victimized by scams and predators, working directly with the courts to oversee and administer guardianships, and — by leveraging thousands of hours of pro bono help from area law firms — producing hundreds of wills, powers of attorney, advanced health directives and other “end-of-life” legal documents.

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SERVED MORE CLIENTS, HANDLED MORE CASES THAN ANY OTHER YEAR IN THE HISTORY OF LCE

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- > Obtained \$18,586,685.05 in benefits for our clients.
- > Handled 6,522 cases.
- > The LCE Hotline worked on 4,022 cases for 2,552 clients.
- > Stopped a foreclosure sale for an 87-year-old, hospitalized client, saving the \$399,000 home she lived in for 40 years. The reverse mortgage company dismissed the case just hours before LCE filed a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO), and after multiple communications with the company. Since the client was unable to come to LCE's office, our Homebound Elderly Project (Project HELP) attorney, met with the client in the hospital to execute the Affidavit in support of the TRO.
- > Negotiated the reduction of a rent debt from \$10,000 to \$79 for a client at risk of eviction from her subsidized apartment.
- > Negotiated a settlement agreement for a homeless family of five. A D.C. housing agency granted the family extra time to fulfill their obligation to find housing in order to keep their voucher. Through a combination of legal and social work services, the family's income benefits increased; they received assistance with their security deposit; they found a new home; and they kept their voucher.
- > Reached a \$35,000 settlement agreement on three cases for one client who is a caregiver for her granddaughter, who has severe disabilities. The 71-year-old client faced eviction from the accessible home they lived in, because the owner was selling the property. The agreement resolved four years of repair claims. It also arranged for a purchaser to buy the house, and keep it as a rental property, allowing the client and her granddaughter to remain in the home.



“...this is getting too much for a veteran at my age.”

87-year-old veteran overwhelmed by complexities of the application process, with our help now receives a monthly pension, and \$12,000 in retroactive benefits.

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- > Represented a 91-year-old client facing reverse mortgage foreclosure who was behind in her payments after falling victim to financial exploitation. While LCE worked on a number of possible solutions for saving her home, the client agreed to be featured in a *Washington Post* article about reverse mortgages. The article prompted an outpour of offers to help the client, and a trusted family member collected enough donations to stop the foreclosure, with additional dollars going to the client's general needs..
- > Obtained the maximum amount of monthly food stamp benefits (\$198), for an 83-year-old, Spanish-speaking client, including \$396 in retroactive benefits, after learning her benefit would be reduced to \$30/month. This involved several months of follow-up with the non-responsive government agency.
- > A client called LCE's Hotline because she had received a letter from the D.C. Department of Human Services alleging fraud in the receipt of her public benefits. The client's homelessness and temporary stay with her child outside of D.C. triggered the alert. As a result, the client had been unable to access necessary medications. Hotline worked with the client to obtain the necessary documentation to restore her benefits, and then connected the client to D.C. social services, including shelter and a social worker.
- > Advocated for a 102-year-old woman who was the victim of illegal 'hospital dumping.' The hospital discharged the woman, but the nursing home refused to readmit her, so she remained in the hospital. The resident won her right to return to the facility.
- > Proved that a doctor's office did not properly notify a client that they no longer accepted his Medicaid coverage. The provider waived the \$250 bill.
- > Helped 252 clients apply for D.C.'s Schedule H property tax credit, and obtained \$268,461 in benefits.
- > Placed 961 cases with D.C. pro bono attorneys, and 49 systemic reform projects.

**“This is the first
time in my life,
that I’ve ever
owned anything.”**

*69-year-old client awarded the deed
to her property after a complicated
estate settlement.*

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

For year ending December 31, 2017

REVENUES

Contributions, Grants & Support	\$5,927,641
In-Kind Contributions	4,714,469
Investment Revenue and Gains	2,071,262
Miscellaneous	6,904
TOTAL REVENUES	\$12,720,276

EXPENSES

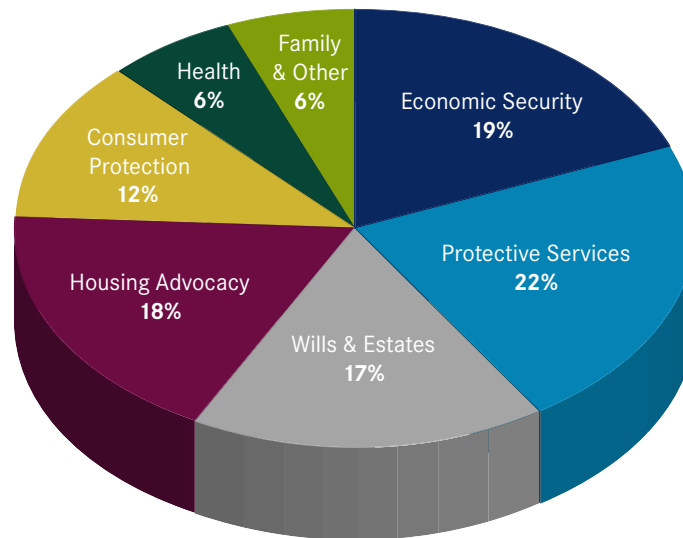
Program Services	\$8,340,816
Management and General	2,039,742
Resource Development	170,825
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$10,551,383

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS \$2,168,893

NET ASSETS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR \$13,525,677

NET ASSETS AT THE END OF THE YEAR \$15,694,570

Net assets include 'The Philip Friedman Consumer Protection Fund' (\$4,673,102) and 'The John R. Pickering Law Student Scholarship Fund' (\$394,930)



TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES: 6,522

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**“I hadn’t even
thought of having
something like that,
and there it was.”**

*94-year-old veteran now receives VA benefits,
plus Medicaid benefits for home healthcare,
preventing unwanted attempts to move her
into a nursing home.*

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**“The stress of
potentially losing
our home was
tremendous.”**

Saved the family home of 55 years.

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**“Where I was, it was
filthy.... this is my
home, here.”**

*81-year-old blind veteran, living in a rat-infested
cellar, moved to a livable apartment, approved for VA
benefits and given a home healthcare aid.*

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Legal Counsel for the Elderly greatly appreciates the generous direct and in-kind support donated by AARP to advance our mission.

We also express our sincere gratitude to the following individuals, families, law firms, foundations, companies, and government agencies for their investment in our work in 2017 and for their ongoing commitment to our older neighbors in need:

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Legal Counsel for the Elderly is affiliated with AARP.



Part of the Senior Service Network supported
by the D.C. Office on Aging

601 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20049
202-434-2120
202-434-6464 fax
lce@aarp.org
aarp.org/lce

