



STRENGTH IN JUSTICE:

OHIO'S LEGAL AIDS ENERGIZING OUR ECONOMY
AND BUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES



Ohio Legal
Assistance Foundation
FUNDING LAWYERS WHO CHANGE LIVES

www.OLAF.org



The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (“the Foundation”), founded in 1994 and located in Columbus, is a statewide, nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that the highest quality civil legal aid is available to all low-income Ohioans. At its core, the Foundation funds lawyers who change lives. The Foundation achieves its mission through the distribution of financial resources generated by the Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) and Interest on Trust Accounts (IOTA) programs, the monies collected through a civil filing fee surcharge, and by raising additional dollars for civil legal aid. As a funder, the Foundation also provides oversight to ensure the quality of legal aid work being performed around the state. The Foundation’s Board of Directors, composed of Ohioans appointed by the Governor, the Attorney General, the Chief Justice, the State Treasurer, the State Public Defender, the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, and the Ohio Senate President, are Ohio leaders deeply committed to access to justice for all Ohioans.

STRENGTH IN JUSTICE

Every day, Ohio's legal aids represent Ohioans to enable them to stabilize their families and participate in the economic health of their communities.

LEGAL AID PRODUCES STATEWIDE ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

In 2010, every dollar invested in Ohio legal aid generated a statewide return of 115%. In economic terms, Ohio legal aid produced \$106 million in economic output for Ohio: \$5.6 million in tax revenue flowed into state, county, and municipal coffers and more than \$48 million in earnings went into the pockets of Ohio workers and businesses. Legal aid also sustained jobs for more than 700 Ohioans throughout the state in all industry sectors.

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LEGAL AID LEVERAGES RESOURCES.

Ohio legal aid works with private lawyers across Ohio who, in 2010, volunteered more than 38,000 hours of free legal services through legal aid at a value of more than \$6.8 million. Legal aid offices also partner with health service providers in local communities to identify and serve low-income families with legal needs. In addition, legal aid brings millions of federal dollars into Ohio in the form of Social Security Disability, Medicare, and other income supports that stabilize families, provide security for seniors, and promote economic activity in local communities.

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LEGAL AID IMPACTS ALL AREAS OF OHIO.

Ohio legal aid's statewide network of civil legal aid offices reaches every community in Ohio's 88 counties and delivers services to more than 164,000 low-income individuals and families across the state every year. Individuals and families earning up to 187% of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive services—that's 1 in 3 Ohioans.

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LEGAL AID SAVES HOMES AND STABILIZES NEIGHBORHOODS.

In 2010, Ohio legal aid helped more than 3,000 Ohio households prevent foreclosure and avoid eviction. This work in turn has helped protect property values, reduce deterioration and crime in neighborhoods, stabilize families by keeping them out of homelessness, and avoid millions of dollars in costs to local governments.

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LEGAL AID RESCUES WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

Ohio legal aid provides safety and stability for women and children who are victims of domestic abuse by securing civil protection orders—nearly 1,000 obtained in 2010 alone—and through other services that help women break legal and financial ties with their abusers.

As a result, women are better able to achieve economic self-sufficiency, children are protected, homelessness is reduced, and violence decreases across generations of families. In addition, Ohio businesses benefit from increased productivity, and families save millions of dollars in medical and mental health services.

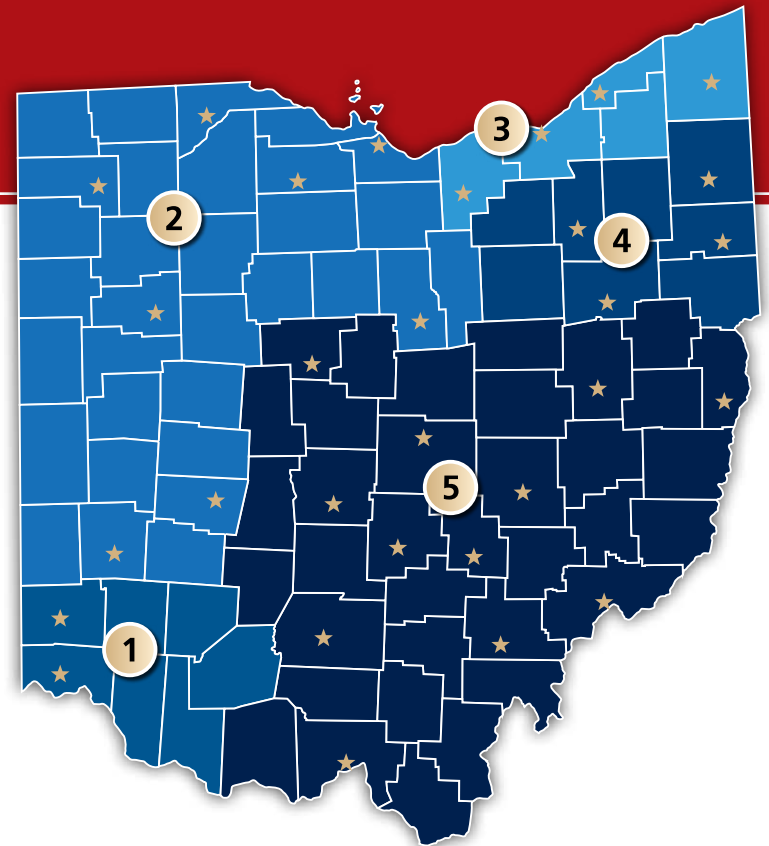
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THE HISTORY OF LEGAL AID IN OHIO

In 1905, Cleveland, a major industrial center of the U.S., founded a legal aid society. Shortly thereafter, in 1908, Cincinnati became the seventh U.S. city to establish an organization that utilizes attorneys to “protect the rights of the needy...and promote measures for their assistance.”¹ Thus, Ohio took an early lead in guaranteeing “liberty and justice for all.”

Throughout the following decades, regional legal aids were established across the state. In 1994, the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation was created to fund and support civil legal aid, so that every Ohioan has access to justice. Since the Foundation’s beginning, the Foundation and the federally funded Legal Services Corporation have collaborated to maximize the capacities of Ohio’s civil justice system. Currently, five thriving legal aids serve low-income Ohioans across the state.



★ Indicates staffed-office in county.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNERS



Research by:

Project Lead: Kerry Beckwith, Senior Research Associate
Roberta F. Garber, Executive Director

300 E. Broad Street, Suite 490 Columbus, Ohio 43215 614-224-5917 www.researchpartners.org

Community Research Partners is a nonprofit research center that strengthens communities through data, information, and knowledge. CRP is a partnership of the City of Columbus, United Way of Central Ohio, The Ohio State University, and the Franklin County Commissioners. CRP is the Ohio partner for the national Working Poor Families Project and a partner in the Urban Institute’s National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.

Consultants to CRP:

Bill LaFayette, Regionomics LLC
Leah Hackleman-Good, Editorial Partners

This publication was financially assisted by the Ohio State Bar Foundation. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the Ohio State Bar Foundation.



¹ Charles F. Casey-Leininger, *To Secure Justice and Protect the Rights of the Needy-A History of the Legal Aid Society of Cincinnati, 1908-1988*, (Cincinnati, OH: The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati, 2008).

LEGAL AID PRODUCES STATEWIDE ECONOMIC BENEFITS

LEGAL AID OFFICES STIMULATE OHIO'S ECONOMY

TAX IMPACT

- In 2010, Ohio's legal aids' activities generated **\$5.6 million²** in total tax revenue.
- **\$2.1 million** in state tax revenue and **\$3.5 million** in tax revenue to counties and municipalities.

\$5.6 million

EARNINGS IMPACT

- In 2010, Ohio's legal aids spent **\$32.9 million³** in wages and salaries for legal aid employees.
- This in turn, generated an additional **\$15.7 million²** in wages and salaries within industries where legal aid employees made purchases.

\$49 million

EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

- In 2010, Ohio's legal aids employed **627³** people.
- This in turn, created or sustained employment for **100²** additional people in industries and communities across Ohio.

700+ jobs

TOTAL IMPACT

- In 2010, Ohio's legal aids, including the Foundation, operated with a budget of \$49.1 million.
- This in turn, generated an additional \$56.8 million in economic output across Ohio.

\$106 million

— A RETURN OF 115% FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED.

² Derived from the calculation of total economic impact by using regional input and output multipliers provided by the Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II) of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

³ 2010 Annual Reports and workforce data reported by the Ohio legal aids to the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation.

LEGAL AID LEVERAGES RESOURCES

LEGAL AID STRENGTHENS OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

Through Medical Legal Partnership programs, legal aid attorneys partner with hospitals, who help identify patients and families in need of legal assistance. Services may include obtaining child Social Security benefits, preserving affordable housing, obtaining appropriate special education services, obtaining custody for relative caregivers, and resolving consumer matters.

LEGAL AID BRINGS MONEY INTO OHIO.

The work of Ohio legal aid brings millions of federal dollars into Ohio that would otherwise be lost to local economies. These new dollars come in the form of Social Security Disability, Medicare, and other income supports that stabilize families, provide security for seniors, and promote economic activity in local communities. Families spend their income supports on rent, food, and health services in their communities, which in turn provides income for local businesses and wages for working Ohioans.

LEGAL AID ENHANCES PRO BONO EFFORTS.

Ohio legal aid provides a statewide framework for building relationships and coordinating the tools needed by private attorneys to donate their time assisting those in need. In 2010, private lawyers across Ohio volunteered 38,964 hours⁴ of free legal services to legal aid clients.

PRO BONO ATTORNEYS WORKING THROUGH LEGAL AID DONATED MORE THAN \$5 MILLION IN LEGAL SERVICES IN ONE YEAR.

The value of the nearly 39,000 hours of legal services at an average rate of **\$175/hour**⁵ provided by pro bono attorneys in 2010 was **\$6.8 million**.

⁴ As reported to the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation by the Ohio legal aids.

⁵ Ohio State Bar Association, *The Economics of Law Practice in Ohio in 2010*, 7. https://www.ohiobar.org/General%20Resources/pub/2010_Economics_of_Law_Practice_Study.pdf. The amount is derived from averaging the median hourly rate reported by male attorneys (\$200) and female attorneys (\$150).

BEN'S STORY

Ben* was 7 months old when he was diagnosed with several medical conditions that could have resulted in permanent facial deformity and life-long medical problems. Ben's application for a prescribed baby helmet was declared a "non-covered service" by a state agency and was denied.

The medical center where Ben was a patient referred Ben's family to legal aid. Legal aid interceded on Ben's behalf, and through advocacy and without a lawsuit, convinced the agency to approve the baby helmet.

As a result of the Medical Legal Partnership, Ben's treatment was successful, and he is now a healthy, thriving little boy.



**Names and photos have been changed to protect client privacy.*

LEGAL AID IMPACTS ALL AREAS OF OHIO

The work of legal aid benefits every community in Ohio's 88 counties and delivers services to more than 164,000 low-income individuals and families including seniors, children and veterans across the state every year.

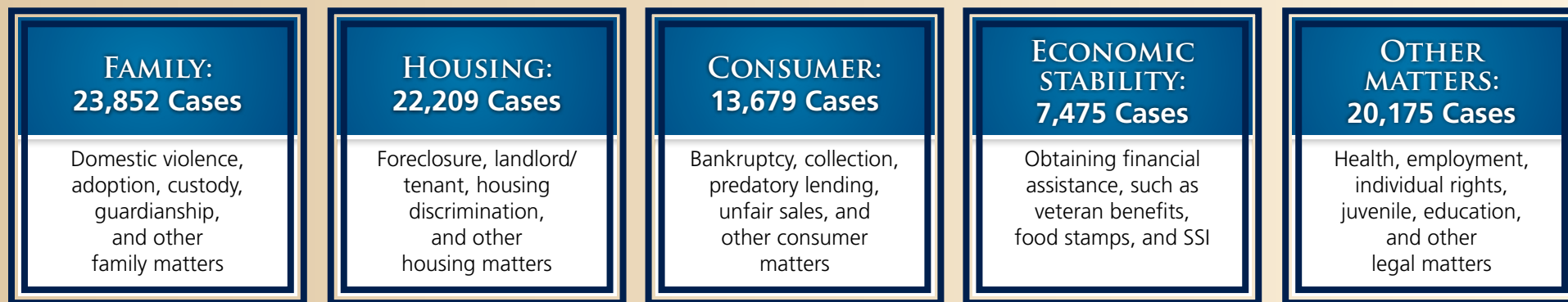
LEGAL AID REACHES EVERY OHIO COMMUNITY.

- There are 28 legal aid offices located throughout the state.
- Legal aid attorneys appear in court in all 88 counties.
- Legal aid extends its reach by leveraging phone and online technologies to make lawyers available to all low-income Ohioans.
- Legal aid provided assistance in 16,894 senior matters across Ohio.⁶
- Legal aid provided advice and representation in 70,496 matters for low-income Ohioans and Ohio families.⁷

LEGAL AID LAWYERS CHANGE LIVES.

Direct civil legal assistance is the core service of Ohio's legal aids. Legal aid clients are the homeowners and renters in our neighborhoods; the consumers on "Main Street;" and the employees in our manufacturing plants, farms, restaurants, and hospitals who are living ordinary, hard-working lives. In 2010, legal aid helped low-income Ohioans resolve a wide range of challenging civil legal problems.⁸

87,390 Legal Matters Addressed⁹



⁶ 2010 Case Service Report as required by 42 U.S.C. 2996g.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ohio legal aids do not represent clients in criminal matters pursuant to 45 C.F.R. 1613.3 and 1613.4.

⁹ 2010 Case Service Report as required by 42 U.S.C. 2996g.



SARAH'S STORY

Sarah* was in the military and serving in Iraq. Her husband, Jim,* was home caring for the kids. Jim had a long history of abusing Sarah, as well as drug and alcohol problems. Although Sarah was sending her entire housing allowance to Jim, he did not pay the mortgage on their home, which was Sarah's childhood home. The bank filed for foreclosure. Jim also falsified a document, stating that Sarah was NOT in the military, even though her military status would have required the bank to delay the foreclosure proceedings.

Jim was arrested twice for DUI with the children in his car, and went to jail. Sarah was permitted to return from Iraq to care for her children, but once Jim was released from jail, he began harassing and threatening Sarah, trying to get back into the home. Legal aid represented Sarah to get a protection order and temporary custody of the children. Legal aid also evaluated the foreclosure case, and referred Sarah to a pro bono attorney for foreclosure defense, which was successful. Legal aid helped Sarah obtain a divorce, permanent custody of her children, child support, and sole ownership of her childhood home.

**Names and photos have been changed to protect client privacy.*

LEGAL AID SAVES HOMES AND STABILIZES NEIGHBORHOODS

In 2010, Ohio legal aid helped more than 3,000 Ohio households avoid foreclosure and eviction.

FORECLOSURES COST LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MONEY.

Every foreclosure may cost local governments up to **\$34,000**¹⁰ in public resources for vacant and abandoned properties' maintenance, sheriff evictions, inspections, public safety, trash removal, and lost property taxes.

LEGAL AID SAVES LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MONEY.

In 2010, legal aid saved almost **1,000** homes from foreclosure,¹¹ thereby saving local governments millions in vacant property costs.

LEGAL AID PRESERVES HOME VALUES.

Even one foreclosed home in a neighborhood may lower property values for other homes by as much as **2.1%**.¹² A home worth \$135,000, the average value of a home in Ohio, would lose \$2,835 of its value. By saving homes, legal aid helped protect more than \$2.7 million in home value in 2010.

LEGAL AID STABILIZES NEIGHBORHOODS.

Each foreclosure in a neighborhood may correspond to a **2.4%** increase in violent crime.¹³ Thus, as a result of legal aid's work, our neighborhoods are safer for all who live in them.

LEGAL AID PREVENTS EVICTION AND HOMELESSNESS.

In 2010, legal aid lawyers helped **2,115** tenants avoid or delay eviction.¹⁴ By representing renters in landlord/tenant disputes, legal aid keeps families stable in their homes, delays eviction, improves housing conditions, and enforces the legal rights all renters share.

MR. R'S STORY

Mr. R, a homeowner in southeastern Ohio facing foreclosure, received information in the mail from a mortgage rescue company guaranteeing, for a fee, to save his home. After he paid hundreds of dollars, the company did little work, and Mr. R. lost his home through foreclosure.

Legal aid filed a lawsuit against the company claiming fraud and violations of Ohio's consumer laws. Through advocacy, legal aid obtained a money settlement and Mr. R. used the settlement money to buy back his home from the bank.

¹⁰ William Apgar and Mark Duda, *Collateral Damage: The Municipal Impact of Today's Mortgage Foreclosure Boom*, (Minneapolis, MN: Homeownership Preservation Foundation, 2005).

¹¹ 2010 Case Service Report as required by 42 U.S.C. 2996g.

¹² Brian Mikelbank, *Spatial Analysis of the Impact of Vacant, Abandoned, and Foreclosed Properties*, (Cleveland, OH: Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, Office of Community Affairs, 2008). http://www.clevelandfed.org/community_development/publications/spatial_analysis_impact_vacant_abandoned_foreclosed_properties.pdf.

¹³ D. Immergluck and G. Smith, *The Impact of Single Family Mortgage Foreclosures on Neighborhood Crime*, (Chicago, IL: Woodstock Institute, 2005).

¹⁴ 2010 Case Service Report as required by 42 U.S.C. 2996g.



PRICE HILL'S STORY

Price Hill Will is a nonprofit whose mission is to create systemic change through economic development and physical revitalization. The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati is partnering with Price Hill Will to achieve the shared goal of reversing the Price Hill neighborhood's decline and helping working families become Price Hill homeowners.

Before this partnership, these foreclosed homes had deteriorated to the point where they were uninhabitable neighborhood eyesores. Now, through the joint efforts of legal aid and Price Hill Will, foreclosed properties have become safe attractive and affordable.

Each house represents a new beginning for a low or moderate income family.

As Price Hill Will's legal counsel, the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati researches property ownerships, works with the City to step up housing code enforcement, files public nuisance lawsuits, negotiates for key properties with banks holding neglected properties, and secures tax abatements for new homeowners.

LEGAL AID RESCUES WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In 2010, legal aid kept victims of domestic violence and abuse safe by obtaining nearly 1,000 civil protection orders.¹⁵

OHIO LEGAL AID PROTECTS WOMEN AND FAMILIES.

Legal aid lawyers provide comprehensive services to women struggling to overcome domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. These services include obtaining restraining orders; negotiating child support, custody, divorce, and visitation restrictions; and other services that help women break legal and financial ties with their abuser.

BY PROTECTING VICTIMS, OHIO LEGAL AID SAVES MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

An estimated **166,000** incidences of domestic violence occur in Ohio every year.¹⁶ The medical and mental health services costs resulting from this violence are estimated at **\$213 million**.¹⁷ By helping women break the cycle of violence, legal aid saves Ohio millions.

BY EMPOWERING WORKING WOMEN, OHIO LEGAL AID INCREASES WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY.

Nationally, victims of domestic violence lose almost 8 million days of paid work—the equivalent of removing 32,000 full-time jobs from the U.S. economy.¹⁸ By advocating for victims, legal aid helps local businesses and the women who work for them to thrive.

LEGAL AID HELPS WOMEN AVOID HOMELESSNESS.

Battered women who live in poverty without legal protection from their abuser are often forced to choose between staying in the abusive relationship and homelessness. Fleeing abuse and domestic violence is a primary cause of homelessness among women in Ohio and nationally.¹⁹ Legal aid represents women, not only in civil protection orders, but in obtaining and maintaining housing and income.

LEGAL INTERVENTION HELPS BREAK CYCLES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE.

Witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their partner(s) and children when they become adults compared to boys who do not witness domestic violence.²⁰ By protecting women and children, legal aid reduces violence in our communities.

LEGAL INTERVENTION PROTECTS CHILDREN.

Nationally, 30% to 60% of those who abuse an intimate partner also abuse children in their household.²¹ Children who witness violence at home display emotional and behavioral disturbances as diverse as withdrawal; low self-esteem; nightmares; self-blame; and aggression against peers, family members, and property. By representing mothers who are victims, legal aid promotes a safer and more secure home environment for Ohio's children.

¹⁵ 2010 Case Service Report as required by 42 U.S.C. 2996g.

¹⁶ Kenneth Steinman and Timothy Sahr, *White Paper on Improving Family Violence Prevention in Ohio*, (The Anthem Foundation of Ohio and Health Policy Institute of Ohio, 2008). http://a5e8c023c8899218225edfa4b02e4d9734e01a28.gripelements.com/pdf/publications/ofvp_whitepaper.pdf.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Department of Health and Human Services, *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2003). http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/ipvbook-final-feb18.pdf.

¹⁹ U.S. Conference of Mayors, *Hunger and Homelessness Survey: A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities*, 2005. <http://www.usmayors.org/hungersurvey/2005/HH2005FINAL.pdf>.

²⁰ Murray Strauss and Richard Gelles, *Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8145 Families* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990).

²¹ J.L. Edelson, "The Overlap Between Child Maltreatment and Woman Battering," *Violence Against Women*, 5, 134-154, 1999.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OBTAINED BY LEGAL AID FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN 2010 FAMILY CASES:²²

Secured or retained safe environment for clients and children; reduced risk to children; removed barriers to education

2603

Secured or retained child support; retirement benefits; health insurance; other assets

872

Secured or retained shelter; reduced debt

1194

ILAH'S STORY

In 1995, Ilah Adkins walked through the doors of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland as a scared and vulnerable client. At age 19 with two young children, Ilah's marriage turned ugly. A friend referred her to Legal Aid for help. She met attorney Alexandria Ruden who asked Ilah questions not only about the marriage, but also about her future and the example she wanted to give her children.

The divorce was final within the year, and by then, Ilah was enrolled in college. Ilah entered Cleveland Marshall Law School in 2001. In her third year of law school, she met an executive at Charter One Bank who offered her a clerkship—which turned into a full-time job as legal counsel. All along she remained in touch with Ruden, her Legal Aid attorney. Ilah joined Legal Aid's board of directors as an attorney and served as board president in 2010.

Ilah has said, "I never want to forget where I came from. I want to make sure the door is always open behind me for other low-income and vulnerable people who need help."





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