

From Our 2021 Co-Chairs



It is a privilege for me to serve as Co-Chair of Maine's 2021 Campaign for Justice. I have called Maine home since 1994, the year I became a staff attorney at Pine Tree Legal Assistance. During that time, I represented migrant farmworkers statewide in legal problems related to their work. I also assisted low-income residents of the Bangor area in housing, domestic violence and public benefits cases. Working alongside Pine Tree's attorneys and paralegals was one of the greatest honors of my life.

After transitioning to Unum's Law Department, I continued to support my former legal aid colleagues in the quest for equal access to justice for the poor and elderly. Throughout these years, I have served on the Board of Directors of the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, Maine Justice Foundation, and Pine Tree Legal Assistance, of which I was President from 2007 to 2009. For more than a decade, I also helped federal and state funders of legal aid programs evaluate the quality of services provided by more than 30 grantees around the country.

Much has changed in Maine since my days as a legal aid attorney. However, the challenges for the most vulnerable Mainers have persisted, intensifying with the COVID pandemic. Fortunately, Maine's legal services providers have persisted, too! They have stepped up their already

outstanding efforts and now, more than ever, need the support of Maine's legal community. The Campaign for Justice is an exceptional opportunity to show them our support by making a financial contribution. This year I am proud to lead the way with David Soley, my Co-Chair.

As we move through 2021, please know that we welcome your thoughts and input on the Campaign's efforts. After all, you have seen up close the struggles many face in our legal system. We hope you will join us again this year in support of justice for all.



DAVID SOLEY, ESQ.

I am deeply honored to serve with Cesar Britos as Co-Chair of this year's Campaign for Justice. When I decided, at age 5, to become a trial lawyer, I never envisioned the pressing needs we are experiencing today as our elderly, impoverished, and immigrant neighbors strive to stay afloat in a pandemic and recession that threatens their basic housing, their food, their heat, their health and well-being. As a founding attorney of both the Maine Homeless Legal Clinic and Free Legal Services for Maine (FLAME), I have seen firsthand and am immensely proud of the tremendous number of our Maine colleagues who contribute their skills, passion, and time to pursuing our common calling of justice for all – and the rule of law.

I am convinced that the practice of law is the most satisfying job on the planet – and am always amazed at our ability to "do good" for our clients and for our very way of life. We are all professionals deeply committed to each other and to the legal system we serve. We live in one of the most spectacular and enjoyable places in our country, yet recognize that we are surrounded by people with real needs.

While the shock of living and working in a COVID world has now mostly worn off, the six legal aid providers we help support with the Campaign for Justice are still facing unprecedented levels of

need. As Cesar and I move forward with the 2021 Campaign efforts, we will look for your guidance and support to help alleviate as much as we can.

I want to thank all of you in advance for everything you do – and for your part in making this year's Campaign for Justice a little extra special.

\$626,000 Raised for Legal Aid Thanks to our 2020 Co-Chairs, Dave and Sally

The generosity of the Campaign for Justice supporters you will read about in these pages—and the impact of Campaign giving on those vulnerable Mainers whose stories are told here—are a result of the efforts of our 2020 Campaign Chairs, David Pierson of Eaton Peabody and Sally Mills of Hale & Hamlin, LLC.

When Dave and Sally agreed to Co-Chair the 2020 Campaign, they had no idea they were about to embark upon a fundraising effort that would soon be dramatically impacted by a health crisis unlike anything most of us have ever seen in our lifetimes. A debt of gratitude goes to Dave and Sally for their unwavering commitment, their ability to think on their feet and pivot, and most importantly, their determination to stay the course.

Thanks to their herculean efforts, Dave and Sally delivered the second-highest ever Campaign total in history, securing much needed funds for Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic, Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, Legal Services for the Elderly, Maine Equal Justice, Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project, and Pine Tree Legal Assistance. At the same time, they increased participation amongst members of the Maine Bar by over four percent in just twelve months.

In honor of their extraordinary work in 2020, the Board of Directors of the Maine Justice Foundation in February passed a Board Resolution recognizing Dave and Sally and thanking them for their contributions. It reads, in part: Whereas





David/Sally with grace, diligence and resolve faced the challenges caused by a worldwide health crisis in 2020, which brought unprecedented disruption to systems of law, education, health care, and government and to businesses of all kind in the State of Maine, impoverishing thousands of Maine people and increasing the need for civil legal aid; Therefore BE IT RESOLVED.

The Directors of the Maine Justice Foundation, collectively and individually, as friends and colleagues of David/Sally, express their profound thanks and admiration to him/her for this achievement, for reflecting onto the Maine Bar the highest qualities of professionalism and service, and for significantly furthering the mission of the Foundation:

"to facilitate the due administration of justice by necessary and proper means, including without limitation, by promoting the provision of legal services to the poor, supporting legal education and scholarship and engaging in activities aimed at enhancing the legal profession's ability to serve the public throughout the State of Maine."

The success of the Campaign for Justice, since its creation in 2004, has been built on the countless hours given by those attorneys who serve as volunteer leaders. Dave and Sally serve as exemplary models for Campaign leaders to follow and we cannot thank them enough for their 2020 efforts.

Volunteers are the Catalyst of our Success

Many factors contribute to the Campaign for Justice, but the countless hours, endless dedication and overwhelming positivity of our volunteers are by far the biggest keys to our success. To them, we extend our deepest thanks.

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In Memory of Hon. Bruce W. Chandler, a wonderful person, ardent feminist, and steadfast defender of justice and compassion. He shared practical lessons in law and life, often infused with hearty laughter, and, sometimes, with a twinkle in his eye. May he rest in peace. Laura M. O'Hanlon

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"I give to the Campaign every year because of the transformation in the lives of Mainers that legal services can provide. Every person deserves to live safely, with access to food, health and shelter, and the providers support access to those fundamental rights through their effective, compassionate and tireless advocacy."

> -Wendy J. Harlan, AVP and Managing Counsel, Investments, **Unum Law Department**



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On its tenth anniversary, the Campaign for Justice created the Founders Circle to recognize those supporters who had donated to the campaign every year. We continue to acknowledge those who have donated for ten or more consecutive years. Thank you to all Founders Circle members for your steadfast support.

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A Year of Loss and Lessons for Volunteer Lawyers Project

Like many other organizations across our state, Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) scrambled in 2020 to meet the needs of its clients while keeping staff and volunteers safe. In the middle of this transition, one of VLP's founders and beloved Executive Director, Juliet Holmes-Smith, died suddenly in August. Through tireless efforts by the

board and staff, and the generosity and flexibility of dedicated volunteers, Volunteer Lawyers Project is emerging from this crisis with stability and an eye to future growth, and with an unwavering commitment to increase access to justice through volunteer engagement - just what Juliet would have wanted.

The work of the volunteers at VLP continues to change lives profoundly. In the past year, one of the clients VLP assisted was a young single mother from Augusta. Her apartment had been rendered unlivable due to a flood in a neighboring apartment. Being a single mom working through college, the displacement and financial hardship caused by her flooded apartment took a huge toll on her, her son, and her education. She was having a significant struggle dealing with the insurance company of the neighbor responsible for the flood as she tried to get reimbursed for everything that was lost and damaged. She came to VLP looking for legal help to deal with the insurance company and to ensure that she was getting compensated properly. Although the case was an unusual one for Volunteer Lawyers Project, they agreed to help find her suitable representation. Securing an attorney took several weeks, but VLP found a lawyer to take her case pro bono. Months later, a favorable outcome came: VLP heard back from this client, who reported what a great help VLP services were to her and how much it meant to her and her son to not only get legal help and advocacy, but also to have an organization with staff who were caring and treated her with concern and respect in a very difficult time in her life.

On other fronts, two programs that became critical during the pandemic were the Worker's Rights Clinic and new Small Business Clinic. In partnership with the Southern Maine Workers Rights Center, VLP continued and expanded its services to individuals seeking legal assistance related to employment issues. The demand for this service has continued to increase dramatically. In response to the pandemic, VLP also set up a Small Business Clinic to assist employers with fewer than 25 employees with COVID-related legal questions. Through the generous support of experienced business attorneys who volunteer their time, VLP has been able to provide assistance to business owners negatively impacted by the pandemic. One volunteer lawyer helped a local non-profit daycare address the new Portland ordinance requiring higher pay during state emergencies; another successfully assisted the son of a Rockland small business owner prepare to take over the business from his very ill father – including assistance with the property transfer, sale of the business, and tax issues.

After the challenging work this past year to reconfigure its programs to provide remote delivery of legal services, VLP now looks forward to getting back to in-person connections with clients and volunteers. The lessons of the last year demonstrated the value that technology can bring to this work, which will now help extend VLP's reach of services more easily to rural areas across the state. With an eye into 2021, the Volunteer Lawyers Project remains committed to increasing access to justice for the people of Maine.

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ILAP'S IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S PROJECT: New Partnerships, Pathways and People

IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

The path to American citizenship is not an easy one, and is often fraught with challenges that are nearly impossible to navigate without legal counsel. What is a difficult journey for

adults is next to impossible for children in Maine. Thanks to ILAP, those hurdles are now a little easier to overcome.

In 2020, the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP) increased access to legal representation for vulnerable immigrant children and youth in Maine by launching a new "Immigrant Children's Project." This project builds on its previous advocacy work. In 2019, ILAP collaborated with partners to fix an age discrepancy between state and federal law related to Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), opening a pathway to safety and stability for more young people. During just the first month of the Immigrant Children's Project, seventeen young people were paired with pro bono attorneys at Preti Flaherty who will help them pursue life-changing legal status.

The number of SIJS-eligible children in Maine has grown substantially in recent years, which includes youth up to age 21 who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent. During ILAP's first fifteen years, from 1993 to 2008, the organization saw only a handful of SIJS cases total. In 2019, ILAP provided representation in forty-two SIJS cases, including many youth who were temporarily housed at the Portland Expo in 2019. Recognizing the unmet needs of immigrants in Maine, ILAP has responded deftly.

The SIJS application process is complex and difficult to navigate without an attorney, compounded by the fact that eligible children and youth have often survived significant trauma. First, a state court must issue a predicate order finding that the young person's situation meets SIJS qualifications. Then the young person must apply for SIJS status with immigration authorities at the federal level and must sometimes appear before an immigration judge.

The Fall 2020 launch of Immigrant Children's Project greatly expanded access to legal representation for vulnerable immigrant children and youth across Maine. This often includes youth who are pursuing asylum and are unaware that another pathway to legal status may be available. One such young person is "Patrick," a 21-year-old living in the greater Portland area. Patrick is a charismatic high school graduate who enjoys sports and is active in his community. He is also a torture survivor, having been persecuted in his home country for his political views.

Patrick came to Maine as a teenager after his family was unable to protect him from abuse at the hands of the government. He applied for asylum, but like most applicants, his case was referred to immigration court. Once in the deportation process, he was at great risk of being sent back to the country where he had been tortured. After bravely pursuing his case for years, Patrick was unsure of what to do next and turned to ILAP for help. ILAP attorneys recognized that he was eligible for SIJS and they helped him file an application.

Late last year, Patrick received the life-changing news that his SIJS case was approved. With permanent legal status (or "green card"), Patrick became eligible for federal financial aid and was able to start college and pursue his chosen career path. Most importantly, he is safe at home in Maine. We are deeply appreciative of the ILAP clients and community members, like Patrick, who bravely share their stories and shine a light on the injustices inherent in our immigration system. ILAP's work would not be possible without their partnership and courage.

Over the next two years, the Immigrant Children's Project will expand into a comprehensive and collaborative statewide system to identify and represent children and youth who are eligible for SIJS. ILAP is actively recruiting for pro bono attorneys and encouraging firms to reach out it they are interested in exploring partnership.

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COVID-19: Hurting Those Who Can Afford It Least

Structural inequalities can often mean our neighbors have worse health, housing, employment, education, and even access to the civil justice system. In 2020, never were those effects more visible here in Maine. The effects of COVID-19 were felt by all Mainers, but none so much as low-wage workers and minorities. They have been disproportionally impacted by the pandemic. Low-wage workers have been most susceptible to unemployment. Renters are losing their jobs, their houses and apartments, and being forced into a very expensive—and very tight—housing market.

Jennifer is a perfect example: a single mom of three, living in a small Maine town. In January, Jennifer started a new job as an optician with a local eye doctor. Before starting her new job, she had fallen behind on rent and entered into an agreement with her landlord to catch up on payments. When COVID-19 hit Maine in March, Jennifer was cut down to 8 hours a week at her new job and could no longer afford her current or past due rent.

Initially, Jennifer's landlord said he would work with her, but after accepting money from her tax return and stimulus check, he asked local police to remove her from her home. One day in June, Jennifer came home from work to find a notice hanging on her door that said she must leave within 48 hours. In the middle of the pandemic, her landlord threatened to have the police throw her and her kids onto the street.

Jennifer called Pine Tree Legal Assistance (PTLA) for help; she asked if what was happening to her was legal. She wasn't sure what rights she had. One of PTLA's staff attorneys, Lynn, researched the case and identified a legal defense. Lynn drove out to the local court to request an emergency temporary restraining order to stop the landlord from illegally evicting Jennifer. The court granted the order, and Lynn immediately notified the landlord and the local police that Jennifer and her kids could stay in their home.

What would have happened if Pine Tree Legal Assistance had not helped Jennifer?

In the midst of a pandemic, three children and an adult would be left without shelter and at risk of immediate health and safety concerns. Since many landlords will not rent to anyone with a past eviction or debt owed to a previous landlord, actions like this push vulnerable families - like Jennifer's - into substandard housing in disinvested neighborhoods, often with little access to transportation or good jobs.

Many Mainers think that because of our current federal eviction moratorium, renters are not being displaced – nothing could be further from the truth. PTLA has done an exceptional job adopting the practices of and working with the Emergency Rental Assistance program, educating the public virtually on tenant's rights, and remotely assisting in eviction cases whenever possible. Eviction complications, and the resulting domino effect on the housing market, including foreclosures, will certainly persist throughout 2021. PTLA will remain on the forefront of education and serve as a go-to community resource for Mainers in need.

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"CALLERS ARE CRYING MORE": Legal Services for the Elderly Protects Maine's Most Vulnerable

In 2020, Legal Services for the Elderly (LSE) continued its work protecting older Mainers from situations beyond their control - situations which would have been incredibly difficult in normal times, exacerbated critically by a COVID world. Two cases illustrate some challenges of the last year.

When Mary called LSE, she had family members living in her home that had become abusive and were destroying the property. In addition, Mary wanted to isolate herself from the public as much as possible due to significant health risks if she were to contract COVID-19. Her family members refused to take any precautions whatsoever. Tension was growing over property damage and health concerns, and the family members were becoming physically threatening when Mary tried to reason with them. An LSE attorney started an eviction proceeding. Although most eviction hearings were on hold at the time, the attorney handling this case got it set for hearing by identifying it to the court as a case involving escalating safety concerns. Mary obtained an eviction order, and the Sheriff removed the family members from her home. If Mary had not had the help of an attorney, she would have been forced to choose between continuing to live in unsafe conditions for the indefinite future or trying to find alternative housing in the midst of the pandemic.

Julie contacted LSE because she had just learned that the town code enforcement officer was going to post her home as condemned at the end of the week. The home was unsafe, but Julie had no other place to go. In addition, Julie was in desperate need of medically necessary surgery, but her medical providers would not perform the procedure until she had secured safe housing. Julie was over the age of 80 and completely overwhelmed by the situation. As this was happening, the State of Maine issued stay-at-home orders because of the COVID-19 pandemic. An LSE attorney reached out to the town and convinced them to delay the condemnation until Julie could secure safe housing, but because of the pandemic, emergency housing was unavailable. The LSE attorney worked with several partner agencies to search for alternative housing, and eventually Julie secured a safe place to go. As a result, she was able to receive the surgery she so desperately needed. Julie would have become homeless during the pandemic if she had not had the help of an LSE attorney.

While these client examples may seem extreme, they are in fact emblematic of LSE's thousands of clients. LSE recently reported that while overall call volume to their helpline was down in 2020, a staggering amount of those calls were classified as emergencies/high risk – a 61% increase from the year before. While Mary and Julie's cases seem removed from our day-to-day experiences, their plight is not uncommon, and this trend for dire need has continued into 2021.

LSE has moved deftly and fluidly to address the needs of elderly Mainers, but more help is needed. To learn more about how LSE is handling critical services, visit mainelse.org.

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CUMBERLAND LEGAL AID CLINIC AND PROTECTION FROM ABUSE WORK: Pandemic Provides Lessons in Overcoming Challenges to Help Those in Need



Since the onset of COVID-19, there has been a staggering uptick in domestic violence worldwide – with some studies citing a tenfold increase in incidents. Maine is no exception. More notably, though more abuse is occurring, an ongoing housing crisis in Maine on top of pandemic health concerns means that many people remain living with their abusers. Simply put, they have no other place to go.

The University of Maine School of Law's Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic (CLAC or Clinic), now celebrating its 50th year, is one of the statewide legal aid providers helping Maine survivors of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault access the legal remedies that will enable them to escape violence and harm.

At CLAC, second- and third-year law students, practicing law pursuant to special authority granted by the courts and agencies and under the supervision of the Clinic's faculty, address domestic abuse and sexual assault cases directly through Protection from Abuse (PFA) hearings at Lewiston District Court. Students enrolled in all of the Clinic's programs participate in the Protection from Abuse Project, through which they not only address a critical need in our communities but also receive valuable training and experience in an incredibly difficult subject matter.

For more than twenty years, student attorneys in the University of Maine School of Law's Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic have represented victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking through the PFA Project. Each student attends at least one or two days of the PFA docket calls in Lewiston District Court, the busiest PFA docket in Maine. The Clinic's work in this program is highly valued by the courts, as these proceedings are often contentious and emotional. Student attorneys work closely with court advocates from Safe Voices and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, two non-profit organizations. This collaboration ensures that every client not only receives legal representation in his or her protection order case, but also receives the necessary support and resources to escape violence over the long term. Furthermore, every Clinic student receives training on the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as the legal remedies available to victims.

Recognizing the urgent need to provide access to safety for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, PFAs are one of the only types of cases that Maine courts continued to hear in person throughout most of the pandemic in 2020 - and for the same reason, the Clinic continued its Protection from Abuse Project without interruption. During the spring 2020 "stay at home" restrictions ordered by Governor Mills, the Clinic worked with the court clerks and judges to ensure that the students could continue to work with plaintiffs remotely to help them negotiate a resolution of their cases without the need for a hearing. For those weeks, the Clinic provided remote (phone and videoconference) assistance to clients in terms of (1) legal advice and information on PFA cases, and (2) negotiation with Volunteer Lawyers Project pro bono attorneys. Students also appeared in court matters via telephone to argue on a client's behalf, such as for continuances for plaintiffs who were unable to go in person to the courthouse due to specific medical risks. In June 2020, in-person representation by the Clinic student attorneys resumed, and during the year, the Clinic represented more than two hundred clients in PFA cases.

As Maine begins to emerge from the COVID-19 restrictions that have been in place for more than a year, we can hope that the frightening trends in domestic violence will start to reverse. The Clinic's Protection from Abuse work in Lewiston District Court will continue to address survivors' need for legal help. Professor Deirdre M. Smith, the Clinic's Managing Director observed: "The student attorneys experience of pandemic lawyering has no doubt taught them an even greater range of lessons than students usually have in Clinic. I have been so moved by the students' dedication, creativity, and resilience as they ensured that survivors continued to have the legal help they need to obtain protection under Maine's laws."



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Racial Inequity in Pandemic Is Laid Bare in Maine, and Maine Equal Justice Responds



The year 2020 was a masterclass in inequality, and at the height of the COVID-19 crisis in Maine we got one of the year's harshest lessons. In May, local news outlets reported that infection rates of COVID in Black households were nearly four times the rate in the rest of Maine's population. Maine Equal Justice (MEJ), along with many partners in Maine communities and government, worked hard to address some of this inequality and to provide pandemic relief.

Maine Equal Justice collaborated with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and community partners to address disparities in access to health care. Calling attention to the unequal impact of COVID on Black Mainers and immigrants, MEJ called on policymakers to address health disparities and advocated to increase the use of the Emergency Medicaid Program for Mainers who are immigrants who are typically unable to access Medicaid.

Maine Equal Justice placed racial equity at the center of its work this year, addressing systemic racism in the state's pandemic response and urging policymakers to do the same. Maine Equal Justice worked to highlight the impact of COVID on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Maine. They helped build and staff a new coalition - the Coalition on Racial Equity (CORE) - to advocate for equitable policies, laws, and practices at the Maine State Legislature. CORE asked candidates for the legislature to commit to a racial equity pledge. Over 60 policymakers pledged to center racial equity while serving in the legislature.

A staff member of MEJ serves as a Commissioner on the newly formed Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations to examine racial disparities across all systems and improve opportunities and outcomes for historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous, and tribal populations in the state. The Permanent Commission is critical to ensuring that Maine grapples with and addresses its centuries-long history of racism and colonization. MEJ strongly supported its establishment in 2019. In 2020, MEJ staff supported an effort to review hundreds of bills and to issue recommendations to the Legislature. The Commission's report (https://www.maine.gov/labor/pcrit/reports/2020_LegReport.pdf) provides that future lawmaking be guided by racial equity and that future lawmaking should proactively address racial disparities.

MEJ also partnered with and supported organizations led by people of color who are doing critical work to address and shrink racial disparities in Maine. MEJ was pleased to support the success of Presente! Maine in civic engagement and community organizing within the Latinx community in Maine. By working in a number of venues, Presente! Maine ensured that members of the Latinx community had a voice in policy decisions that impact their lives. In response to COVID-19, Presente! Maine provided critical support, housing assistance, and hunger relief to community members and worked to mobilize the community to engage civically. MEJ was proud to support and partner with Presente! Maine as a fledgling organization that is filling a void to serve Maine's Latinx community.

Through its systemic and administrative advocacy, Maine Equal Justice reached 183,781 Mainers last year. In 2021, MEJ and its partners will continue working to level the playing field for Mainers who have been disadvantaged by a system which does not address their needs fairly and equally.

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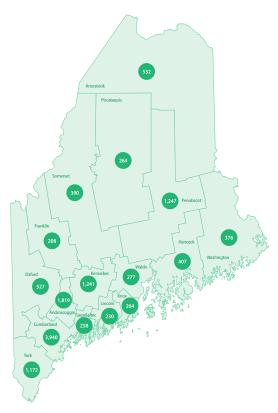
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This is the number of CASES reported to the Maine Justice Foundation for 2020, by county. The number of PEOPLE impacted is much larger—over 300,000.

County

Total	13,152
York	1,172
Washington	376
Waldo	277
Somerset	390
Sagadahoc	258
Piscataquis	264
Penobscot	1,247
Oxford	527
Lincoln	230
Knox	264
Kennebec	1,241
Hancock	407
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