



# Impact Report

2022



# OUR MISSION + VISION

## EXPANDING THE LEGAL ECOSYSTEM

Dylan, a caseworker in San Francisco, had a problem. Their client and two small children were given only 90 days to use their housing voucher, yet landlords repeatedly turned them away because they didn't want to rent to someone with a voucher. Thankfully, Dylan knew what to do. Dylan was certified in Legal First Aid and had learned that this type of discrimination is illegal under California law. Armed with information and Legal Link's written resources, Dylan supported the client to push back on the landlord with confidence. Thanks to their advocacy, Dylan's client secured housing in time.

Laws like the one above can be incredibly impactful, but for the vast majority of families experiencing poverty, these legal protections are out of reach. Too often, people do not seek help from experts outside of their trusted community and fail to identify legal issues in time; those who do are met with labyrinthine intake and eligibility requirements. The legal system is not working on a basic level. It should shock the conscience that the United States has more lawyers per capita than any other country, yet 92% of low-income families do not get adequate help for their civil legal problems.

While the magnitude of the problem can seem intractable, as the late Professor Deborah L. Rhode frequently and fiercely articulated, it also generates powerful opportunities for innovation, and "lawyers are capable of rising to the occasion. They have been at the forefront of every major movement for social justice in this nation's history. The time has come for them to turn more energy inward." To increase access to justice, we must be willing to acknowledge the ways in which lawyers are complicit in preserving these widening inequities, and recognize the power and potential that trusted community partners hold.

At Legal Link, we are committed to expanding the legal ecosystem by supporting a new frontline of legal advocates. Since 2015, Legal Link has trained nearly 1,200 trusted community partners like Dylan in its unique Legal First Aid curriculum. Research shows that people do not always need a lawyer, but a trusted person with an ability to help them navigate legal procedures and rules. These trusted community members already exist, and with the right training and support they can act as Community Navigators who identify legal issues, access legal resources, and remove barriers to poverty alleviation.

We are proud of the work that our small but mighty team accomplished over the past year: we launched our third cohort of Navigator Fellows, designed legal issue screening tools, resumed in-person legal navigation clinics, welcomed additional team members, released our working paper detailing the critical role Community Navigators play in expanding the legal ecosystem, and entered into institutional partnerships to bring our Legal First Aid training to two new states. Our work is just beginning.

As we look forward to 2023, we will continue to work toward our vision: that communities rise out of poverty with equitable access to a just legal system. Thank you for joining us.

In Solidarity,

Sacha + Kate



*Sachal. Steinh*

*KRP*

**Sacha Steinberger + Kate Crowley Richardson**  
**Legal Link Co-Executive Directors**

# 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW



230

trained in  
legal navigation



100%

of navigators reported an  
increase in legal capability



307

free legal consults  
to navigators +  
their clients



17

legal trainings delivered  
to partner organizations



753

active members in  
navigator network



2,300+

families reached  
across the Bay Area

1,197

all-time  
navigators trained in  
Legal First Aid

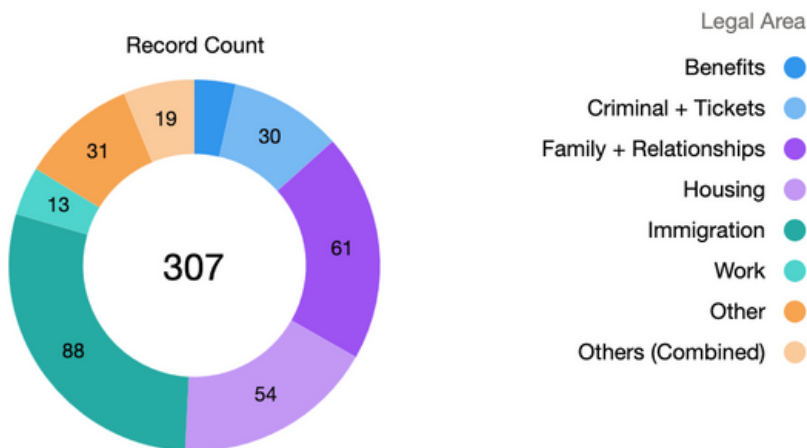
4,116

all-time  
legal consults

# LEGAL FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM

Through our Legal First Aid Training Program, community partners receive training in our unique Legal First Aid curriculum, build legal navigation skills, and provide ongoing direct legal support to clients. After completing the training, participants become certified in Legal First Aid, join our navigator network, and have access to ongoing direct support via legal consultations with Legal Link attorneys. Trained navigators also have access to our web-based referral portal and receive our monthly newsletter containing relevant information on key legal issues most commonly affecting the families they serve.

This year, we certified 171 navigators in Legal First Aid and offered five Legal First Aid trainings to more than 60 community partners across six Bay Area counties. Our team provided over 300 legal consults to navigators and their clients. As shown in the chart below, immigration, family, and housing continued to surface as the top three legal issues.



## LEGAL FIRST AID LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Effectively surface and identify legal issues that clients face.
- Sufficiently connect clients to relevant, timely legal tools and resources.
- Confidently understand the role and scope of navigator support and apply the Legal First A.I.D. method to clients' legal issues.



"One of the most useful trainings I've attended"  
- Legal First Aid Certified Navigator, 2022

"This was very empowering. I feel more confident providing resources to my community."  
- Legal First Aid Certified Navigator, 2022

"Super helpful and informative, made knowledge accessible, equipped us with tools, practice."  
- Legal First Aid Certified Navigator, 2022



# COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Through the Community Navigator Fellowship Program, Legal Link trains and supports staff at partner organizations to be fluent in community-based legal navigation. Fellows – existing staff at our partner organizations – receive a weeklong intensive training, meet with Legal Link attorneys to review issues weekly, and receive ongoing training.

## 2022 COHORT

Our 2022 Community Navigator Fellowship Cohort included six Fellows from three community-based partner organizations, highly-regarded social service providers based in San Francisco: Homeless Prenatal Program, Compass Family Services, and Hamilton Families.

The Cohort reflected the diversity of our community and the client population: 29% identified as Black / African American, 29% identified as Latinx, 14% identified as Asian American, 14% identified as White, and 14% identified as mixed race. 86% identified as women and 57% identified language proficiency in a language other than English.

## LEGAL NAVIGATION IN ACTION

When a Fellow identified that a client's prior eviction was acting as a legal barrier to housing stability, they connected the client to legal counsel and supported the client to communicate with the attorney and collect the necessary documentation. Despite the attorney successfully hiding the eviction court filing from public view, it continued to show up on the client's consumer reports. The Fellow helped the client file disputes with numerous consumer agencies and succeeded at getting the eviction removed from consumer reports, allowing the client to obtain housing.



*Fellows visit the San Francisco Superior Courthouse to observe civil proceedings as part of their training.*



**This program helped me see I can do more than I thought to help a client navigate the legal system. I also feel more confident in understanding what I can and cannot support a client with.**

**I'm a lot more confident in being able to orient the client toward more structured thinking about how to navigate through different legal situations.**

**I can now understand what legal issues they may be having and where to find resources to help them.**



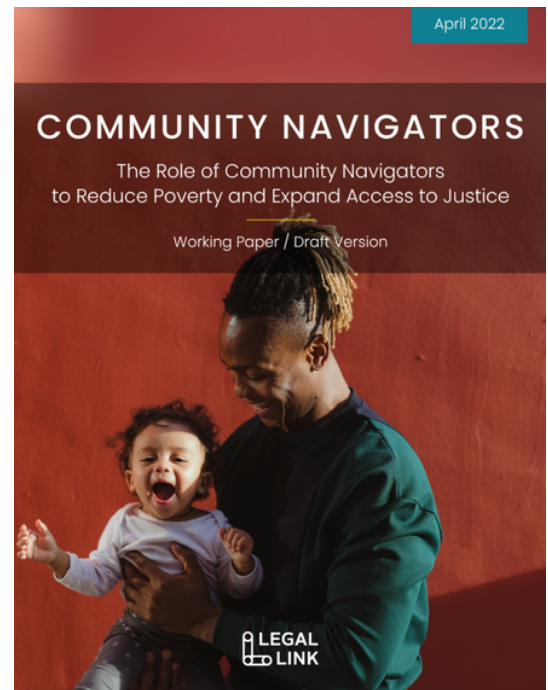


# SUSTAINABLY SCALING OUR MODEL

Legal Link Co-Executive Directors - in partnership with Legal Link Board Member and Stanford Legal Design Lab's Executive Director, Margaret Hagan, authored a working paper to share our learnings and promote the adoption of similar models. The paper details the critical role Community Navigators can play to reduce poverty and expand access to justice.

This year, our team also focused efforts on how to sustainably replicate our model in new jurisdictions. By pairing consulting services on program design with a train-the-trainer program, we are able to bring our customized Legal First Aid curriculum to new communities across the country.

In the summer of 2022, we launched Legal First Aid training programs in South Carolina and Oklahoma. With our partners, we are conducting a year-long data analysis across California, Oklahoma, and South Carolina. We look forward to sharing our findings, which will inform Legal Link's future expansion efforts.



In Oklahoma, we are supporting the Oklahoma Justice Navigator Network - a new statewide program run by the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation - with a customized train-the-trainer Legal First Aid program and program design services.



In South Carolina, we are supporting the South Carolina Justice Navigator Network, a new program in the Charleston Tri-County area led by Georgetown Law's Justice Lab and in partnership with Charleston Pro Bono Legal Services and Charleston Legal Access.

# SUPPORTING THE NAVIGATOR NETWORK

The legal issues our navigators surface directly inform our strategies, trainings, and resource creation. Once we identify specific instances in which the legal system under-supports local families experiencing poverty, we develop targeted initiatives and build out resources to fill those gaps.

## CREATING NAVIGATOR TOOLS

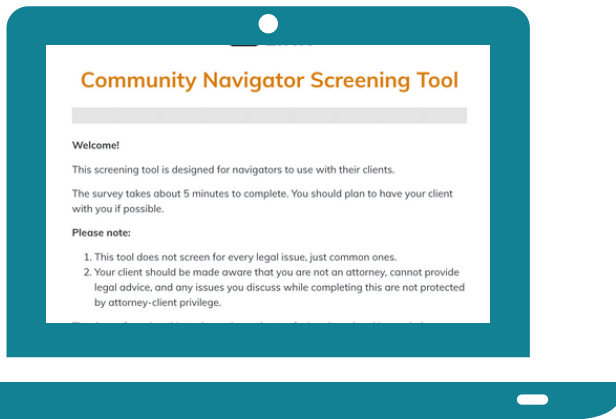
In 2022, our navigators surfaced a pattern of income-based discrimination for clients with housing vouchers – a practice that is illegal under California state law. We created an FAQ to provide navigators with clear information and steps they can take with their clients, including how to file a complaint with the San Francisco Human Rights Commission. These navigation strategies help to make the laws on the books a reality on the ground.

## LEGAL LINK AMBASSADORS

We launched the Ambassador Program as a way to stay more connected to our community partners. Ambassadors help to make sure their colleagues are equipped and supported to access and use Legal Link’s resources, encourage them to become certified in Legal First Aid, and streamline channels of communication.

## NAVIGATOR NETWORK TRAININGS

Each year, we work with local legal experts to deliver issue-specific trainings to our fellows and broader navigator network. In 2022 we partnered with numerous organizations including: the Bar Association of San Francisco’s Justice & Diversity Center; the Immigration Center for Women and Children; the East Bay Family Defenders; and the Housing Rights Committee.



Legal Link was awarded an American Bar Endowment Opportunity Grant to design and launch a Community Navigator Legal Screening Tool. The screening tool serves as a proactive screen for clients and covers a wide range of legal issues. It is now being used by our network of navigators across organizations.



*Legal Navigation Clinic in action at one of our partner organizations, Homeless Prenatal Program*

# OUR IMPACT

As an evidence-informed organization, we use two metrics to measure our success and evidence our impact: the increased legal capability of the navigators we train, and the impact of the navigators' work on clients' poverty-related outcomes.

100% of navigators certified in Legal First Aid evidence an increase in "legal capability" - an emerging concept that refers to the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to deal effectively with the law - including being able to mobilize to resolve legal problems, obtain relevant advice, and achieve better outcomes. Legal First Aid-certified navigators also reported a substantial increase in their ability to identify legal issues, connect to relevant resources + referrals, and understand the type of legal support they can provide to their clients.

Our legal navigation case data indicates that nonlawyer navigator interventions can have a

powerful, positive effect on clients' legal issues and family and housing stability. The 2022 Fellow Cohort opened 27 legal navigation cases, while also providing ongoing legal navigation support to their active caseloads. This year, the cases were heavily concentrated in the areas of family, immigration, and housing - with immigration and family law issues comprising nearly three quarters (74%) of the entire caseload.

The data also reveals that upstream interventions by the Fellows yield positive outcomes for both clients' legal issues and poverty-related stability with limited attorney intervention, particularly in the areas of family and housing stability. For under one-half of cases (44%), Fellows identified an issue for which the client obtained limited or full-scope attorney representation. The rest received Fellow and other non-lawyer support. Positively, 64% of resolved legal issues during the fellowship resulted in a legal win or non-legal win, and none resulted in a legal loss or non-legal loss.\* The remaining "neutral" cases still resulted in the provision of information, empowerment, and informed decision-making about whether and when there was a case to pursue. Tellingly, in 81% of all cases, Fellows reported positive impacts on client stability.

We will continue to test intensive navigator interventions by tracking legal issue outcome data and effects on poverty-related stability areas. As our Legal First Aid training curriculum expands to additional states, we will also continue to measure the legal capability of navigators and look forward to sharing our learnings from the multi-state data comparison.

- ▶ **75% reported an increase in knowing how to identify legal issues that their clients face.**
- ▶ **81% reported an increase in knowing how to connect clients to relevant legal resources and referrals.**
- ▶ **81% reported an increase in knowing what support they personally (as a nonlawyer navigator) can provide to clients when they are faced with legal issues.**

*\*We define these terms as follows: non-legal win = client averted the problem or resolved the issue without use of the courts or attorney action; legal win = a court process or attorney action is successful; neutral win = no harm created and there is no change in legal circumstances.*



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE BROADER LEGAL LINK COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK

Nathan Agrin + Lauren Pappone  
Desiree Almendral  
Sandra + Gerald Ambrozy  
Justin Barra + Vanessa Calderon  
John Beem  
Poonam Bhargava  
Michael Bien  
Michael Blecker  
Jeanne Butterfield + Al Frye  
Jessica Coleman + Jake Lubarsky  
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Ellie + Abbey Lisowski  
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Daniel Lurie + Becca Prowda  
Elise McNamara  
Barbara Mitchell  
Adriana Neal  
Nelson Allen Family  
Nancy Nelson + Jim McNamara  
Jeanifer Parsigian + Lee Brand  
Sherry Prowda

Maganendra Ray  
Kristin Riccio + Josh Greenwald  
Kara + Michael Richardson  
Lauren Roberts  
Barbara Saavedra  
David Sasaki + Iris Calderon  
Kirsten + Andrew Scott  
Libby Sinclair + Bob Crittenden  
Dani + Simon Sollberger  
Charlotte Stanton  
Aaron + Marissa Steinberger  
David + Ethel Steinberger  
Sacha + Joshua Steinberger  
Nicholas Stephens  
Chessie Thacher + Eli Miller  
Jillian Tuck  
Amy Whelan + Eleanor Morton

Mimi and Peter Haas Fund



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF  
HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



WALTER & ELISE HAAS FUND

# THANK YOU TO OUR TEAM + COMMUNITY PARTNERS

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR COMPASSIONATE AND DEDICATED TEAM MEMBERS – INCLUDING LEGAL LINK STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, FELLOWS, AMBASSADORS, AND NAVIGATORS. WE ARE HONORED TO WORK WITH OUR TRAINING PARTNERS – COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE CRITICAL SUPPORT TO FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSECURITY AND POVERTY.

## 2022 TRAINING PARTNERS

Bay Area Community Services  
Brilliant Corners  
Canal Alliance  
Catholic Charities of the East Bay  
College Track  
Compass Family Services  
First Place for Youth  
Freedom Forward  
Fresh Lifelines for Youth  
Hamilton Families  
HomeRise SF  
Homeless Prenatal Program  
Initiate Justice Action  
JVS  
Larkin Street Youth Services  
LifeMoves  
Opportunity Junction  
ParentChild+  
Rebekah Children's Services  
Roots Community Health Center  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
Shelter Inc.  
Shepherd's Gate  
The Bread Project  
The Women's Building  
Upwardly Global  
YearUp  
YMCA of the East Bay

## NAVIGATOR FELLOWS + ALUMNI

**Jesus Aguilar** – 2022, Compass Family Services  
**Adrian Avila** – 2022, Bay Area Community Services  
**Adriana Beltran** – 2022, Compass Family Services  
**Andrew Crater** – 2022, Homeless Prenatal Program  
**Daniela Flores** – 2022, The Women's Building  
**Melanie Mireles** – 2022, ParentChild+  
**Melanie Young** – 2022, Homeless Prenatal Program

**Maria Arribas** – 2021, Hamilton Families  
**Tiara Davis** – 2021, Homeless Prenatal Program  
**Arel Gonzalez** – 2021, Homeless Prenatal Program  
**Jacqueline Molinero Gutierrez** – 2021, Compass Family Services  
**Sujej Ruiz** – 2021, Homeless Prenatal Program  
**Susana Sandoval** – 2021, Hamilton Families

**Oscar Aparicio** – 2020, Homeless Prenatal Program  
**Montez Brooks** – 2020, Compass Family Services  
**Traci Cook** – 2020, Homeless Prenatal Program  
**Clark Wininger** – 2020, Compass Family Services

## AMBASSADORS

**Melissa Aceves** – 2022, Compass Family Services  
**Liz Lawton** – 2022, Homeless Prenatal Program  
**Peyton Stotelmyre** – 2022, Compass Family Services

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**John Beem** – Consultant  
**The Hon. Charles S. Crompton** – San Francisco County Superior Court  
**Shashi Deb** – Adjunct Faculty Member, UC College of the Law, San Francisco  
**Margaret Hagan** – Director of Legal Design Lab and Lecturer, Stanford Law School

## ADVISORY BOARD

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**Salena Copeland** – Legal Aid Association of California  
**Barbara Mitchell** – Formerly of Community Legal Services and Counseling Center  
**Kiran Sidhu** – Golden 1 Credit Union  
**Evonne Silva** – Code for America

## LEGAL FELLOWS, INTERNS + VOLUNTEERS

**Chauncey McNeill** – 2022 Legal Services Funder Network Post-Graduate Legal Fellow  
**Carree Michel** – Graphic Design Volunteer  
**Samantha Perez** – 2022 Intern  
**Amelia Smith** – UC Berkeley School of Law Volunteer  
**Benedicto Vega** – 2022 Legal Intern

## LEGAL LINK STAFF

**Wendy Lopez** – Program Manager  
**Kate Crowley Richardson** – Co-Executive Director  
**Sacha Steinberger** – Founder + Co-Executive Director