

2023 IMPACT REPORT



CREATING A NEW FRONTLINE OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKERS

Melanie had been a caseworker for years, but when clients raised legal issues, she froze. That changed after she received training from Legal Link. One of her clients was facing over \$70,000 in child support debt. Thanks to her training, Melanie knew that these payments should not have accrued while the client was incarcerated, and she worked to clear nearly all of the debt. As a result, her client got his driver's license reinstated and obtained employment. This is what community justice work looks like in action. It is everyday people equipped with the confidence, training, and knowledge to help with legal problem solving. Last year, 221 trusted, frontline partners, like Melanie, completed our training and joined our network of 1,400+ community justice workers across Northern California.

We are heartened to report that the community justice work movement is growing across the country and underscores the urgent need for innovative solutions to address the justice gap. By training community justice workers like Melanie to surface, identify, and address legal issues before they rise to the level of court or attorney intervention, we are expanding the legal ecosystem, allowing attorneys to operate at the top of their license, and most importantly shifting where and how people access critical information about their legal rights.

At Legal Link, we recognize the profound impact that limited access to legal information and support has on low-income communities - particularly and disproportionately on Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities: a driver's license suspension leads to a lost job; a missed immigration court date results in a deportation order; unpaid rent causes an eviction. Upstream, early intervention can have dramatic, life-changing effects and yet too often, legal support is downstream and reactionary. When we deliver trainings, we ask participants to share one word to describe our legal system and without fail we see the same words: broken, unfair, overwhelming, confusing, racist, inaccessible. As an organization, we are dedicated to democratizing the law by making it more transparent and accessible. As lawyers, we take seriously our charge to be responsible stewards of the law - not gatekeepers.

We are proud of the work that the Legal Link team accomplished together over the past year: we launched our Ambassador Program, expanded our Legal First Aid Training Program regionally to four additional counties, conducted a three-state data analysis on our impact across programs in California, Oklahoma, and South Carolina, taught an Access to Justice course to Santa Clara University School of Law students, advocated for statewide support for community justice work, collaborated on the first U.S. Legal Empowerment Leadership Course, and welcomed two new attorneys on staff.

It takes a village to do the hard work of transforming our legal ecosystem. We are grateful to our engaged Board of Directors, insightful Advisory Board, and passionate Legal Link staff. Thank you for your support as we continue to work toward our vision: that communities rise out of poverty with equitable access to a just legal system.

In Solidarity,

Sachal. Stech

KRP



Sachal Steinberger + Kate Crowley Richardson
Legal Link Co-Executive Directors

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



513

attended Legal Link trainings



90%

of justice workers reported an increase in legal capability



209

free legal consults to justice workers + their clients



16

legal trainings delivered to partner organizations



1,097

active members in justice worker network



2,200+

families reached through 2023 trainees

4349

all-time legal consults

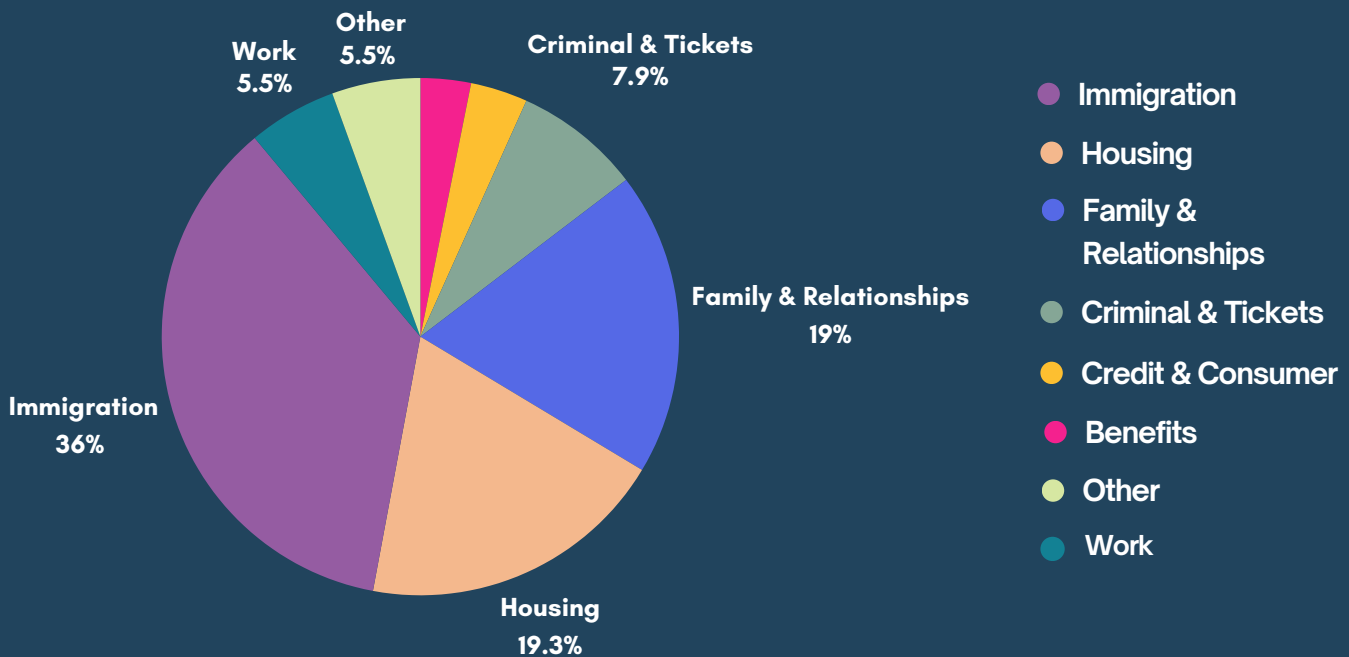
1418

all-time justice workers trained in Legal First Aid

DELIVERING LEGAL FIRST AID

Our unique Legal First Aid curriculum is our foundational training, and is the core building block to community justice work. It is universally understood that having CPR training can save a life, but legal issues can also be life-altering and require the same layered help and triage. This training gives participants an understanding of when life problems become legal, how the legal system is structured, where legal resources are allocated and why, and what to do as a non-lawyer when confronted with legal issues. It gives participants the tools they need to become frontline legal responders.

This year, we certified 221 justice workers in Legal First Aid from more than 60 community partner organizations across ten Northern California counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Stanislaus. The program is more than a training, it is an entry point into our network and ongoing support - we offer free legal consults, web-based screening and referral tools, additional training opportunities, and monthly newsletters. Last year, our team of attorneys provided over 200 legal consults to justice workers and their clients. As shown in the chart below, immigration, family, and housing continued to surface as the top three most common legal issues.



Legal Link’s target population is families experiencing poverty and/or housing insecurity. The majority of clients served by Legal Link and its justice workers are single mothers. These communities see a high volume of legal issues and are motivated to address them in order to stabilize their families. Of available data:

Clients:

- 89% Identify as women
- 96% Identify as parents
- 92% Identify as people of color

Justice Workers:

- 83% Identify as women
- 85% Identify as people of color

JUSTICE WORK IN ACTION

Community Navigator Fellowship Findings

This year, Legal Link completed data analysis of the three-year Community Navigator Fellowship Program. The Fellows - who were staff at Bay Area nonprofit organizations including Homeless Prenatal Program, Compass Family Services, Hamilton Families, The Women's Building, ParentChild+, and Bay Area Community Services - kept their full time positions and added in their work with Legal Link, which included regular training, case reviews, consults, and assessments. These fellows used the year of training and mentorship to craft the skills needed to confidently and effectively act as a justice worker. Legal Link staff provided training in numerous areas of law and supported the fellows to help their clients with any legal issue that surfaced. Through this work, and the data we collected, we sought to understand how a justice worker program that embeds legal support in community-based settings could impact the justice gap.

The program increased the skill and capacity of frontline providers, expanded the legal ecosystem into community-based settings, and promoted participation in our legal system as a means to strengthen accountability and equity. Importantly, we saw significant numbers of cases resolved in the client's favor without legal intervention. The program also showed the breadth of issues that will surface for providers working with populations experiencing poverty, and the clear difference that a knowledgeable justice worker can have even without the ability to resolve issues through law-related means.

We are grateful for the hard work of all of the Fellows who we have worked with during the past three years, and the learnings that this program has afforded us. Going forward, we see great potential in deepening this work, and in training justice workers in more discrete areas of law, allowing them to become more expert and do more legal issue resolution.



Fellows Learnings

- **At program exit, 100% of Fellows evidenced an increase in legal capability**
- **100% said the Program made them feel valued, heard, or appreciated**
- **100% said the Program improved their ability to serve their clients**
- **100% said the Program improved their overall job performance**

FROM THE FELLOWS



I am a transformed professional, from scrambling to educated. I can't thank the program enough for that. With a little help, families can feel empowered with knowledge and more confident in navigating legal issues. Navigating legal issues is actually not as difficult as I thought!

The Fellowship was an incredible experience for me, teaching me how to navigate legal resources for clients, advocate for resources for my clients, and provide them with support on accessing those resources. It also allowed me to be a legal asset for [my organization] as a whole, allowing me to help our entire organization make proper referrals to our diverse range of clients.



Fellows Work in Action



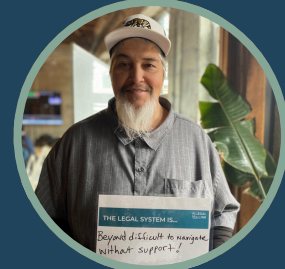
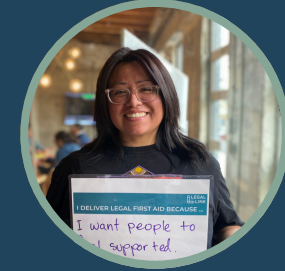
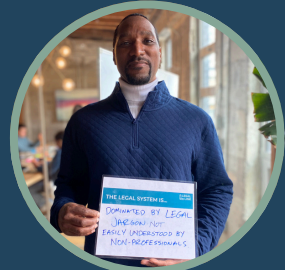
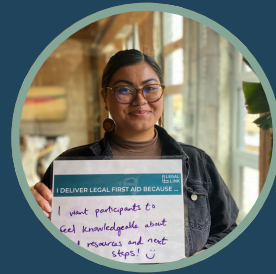
A ParentChild+ Fellow's client received a bill for medical debt that she didn't understand and couldn't pay. The Fellow called the medical provider with the client to get more information. After discussing the situation, the medical provider removed the \$4,000 debt from her account. The client would not have addressed the debt, nor been able to pay it, without the Fellow's support.



A Compass Family Services Fellow's client was attacked by her neighbor and the client was hurt and felt unsafe in her housing. With limited legal help in this area, the Fellow helped the client to get to the self help center to file for a civil harassment restraining order, supported her through multiple court hearings, and helped with safety planning. The client obtained the restraining order and remained stably housed, thanks to the Fellow's support and efforts.



A Compass Family Services Fellow surfaced and identified a fines and fees issue for a client whose ex-partner had stolen her car and received a number of traffic tickets. The justice worker researched the issue and talked the client through next steps. With the justice worker's help, the client obtained a copy of the police report documenting the theft, and submitted it to the right agency. Ultimately, the tickets were dropped.



STRENGTHENING THE JUSTICE WORKER NETWORK

Legal Link Tools + Resources

Legal Link's referral search tool continues to be highly utilized. In 2023 alone, our referral search tool was used over 5,000 times to deliver justice support.



With over 1,000 community justice workers in our active network across Northern California, we are focused on updating and improving our online tools and resources to be tailored to justice worker use and responsive to clients' legal needs. These resources include a comprehensive database of more than 130 legal referral programs serving ten Northern California counties, legal issue screening tools, curated information and resources, and weekly sign-up platforms to meet with Legal Link attorneys.

Legal Link Ambassadors

This year we launched our Ambassador Program, which provides community partners with a deeper understanding of justice work. Ambassadors meet regularly with Legal Link staff to discuss legal issues and act as a bridge between Legal Link and their organization. They ensure their colleagues can access training sessions and legal resources, identify any legal needs or trends in their community, and keep Legal Link updated on organizational changes.

In 2023, Legal Link welcomed four Ambassadors from Bay Area partner organizations, including Homeless Prenatal Program, Booker T. Washington Community Service Center, and Compass Family Services. Ambassadors underwent professional development to improve their legal knowledge and ability to identify important legal processes and resources. They also had opportunities to enhance their public speaking skills and deliver training sessions, deepening their understanding of legal empowerment.



OUR IMPACT

WHAT WE MEASURE

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



MAXIMIZING IMPACT

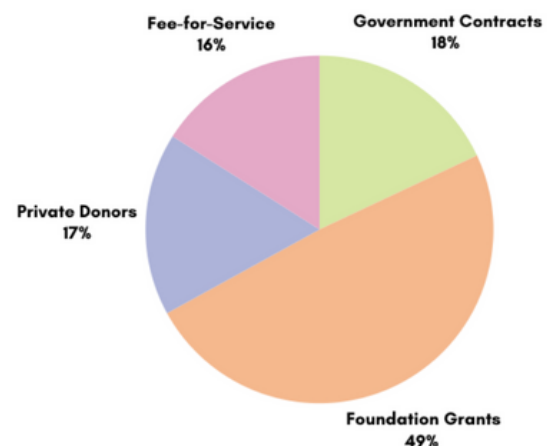
- Legal Link is a team of five staff and a modest budget of \$777,433.
- We leverage our resources strategically to maximize our impact in the community. In 2023, our attorneys certified 221 justice workers, delivering Legal First Aid to more than 2,200 California families. Our 1,000+ active justice workers support over 10,000 families with justice needs each year.
- Our diverse revenue sources include government contracts, foundation grants, private donors, and fee-for-service work.

CASE IMPACT

Our case data demonstrates that justice worker interventions can have a powerful, positive effect on clients' legal issues and family and housing stability. Of available data from **74 justice worker cases**:

- **82%** of justice worker support had a positive or very positive effect on client's economic, family, and/or housing stability (the remaining 18% had a neutral impact, and none had a negative impact).
- In **62%** of cases, justice workers identified an issue for which the client did not receive attorney support.
- Of issues resolved, **80%** resulted in a win (27% were legal wins, 53% were non-legal wins), 18% neutrally, and 2% were legal losses.

We will continue to test intensive justice worker interventions by tracking outcome data and effects on poverty.



TRAINING IMPACT

90%



of justice workers 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.

SCALING THE MODEL

A Three-State Study on Legal Capability + Legal First A.I.D.

In addition to expanding throughout Northern California, Legal Link also supports programs across the country that want to build justice worker programs building on our learnings and curriculum. In these partnerships, data and evaluation remain a priority.

In 2023, Legal Link partnered with our teams from the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation and Georgetown Law to support them to stand up community justice worker programs in Oklahoma and the Charleston tri-county region of South Carolina, respectively. Funding from Georgetown provided for a year-long three-state data evaluation with the help of an Access to Justice expert data consultant. Legal Link supported program design and implementation, modified its existing Legal First Aid™ curriculum for the new states, and trained local staff to deliver the Legal First Aid training to community partners. Training consisted of five hours of Legal First Aid curriculum, with a pre and post assessment. The evaluation team followed-up at 90 days after the training to gather further data.



OKLAHOMA
COMMUNITY JUSTICE
NETWORK



OKLAHOMA
ACCESS TO
JUSTICE
FOUNDATION



JUSTICE LAB
GEORGETOWN LAW



SOUTH CAROLINA JUSTICE
NAVIGATORS NETWORK

In total, 464 Oklahomans and 122 South Carolinians were certified in Legal First Aid. Across the three states, 93% of justice workers certified in Legal First Aid evidence an increase in legal capability. Positively, training participants from both rural and urban localities also reported excellent or above net promoter scores, with high utilization rates and goal attainment. We look forward to continuing to replicate our model and share our learnings to add more Legal First Aid responders to the legal ecosystem nationwide.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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

Desiree Almendral
Gerald + Sandra Ambrozy Fund
Justin Barra + Vanessa Calderon
Kelly Bathgate
John Beem
Poonam Bhargava
Michael Bien + Jane Kahn
Philanthropic Fund
Stephen Bingham
Michael Blecker
William Bruff
Debra Butterfield
Jeanne Butterfield + Al Frye
Malea Chavez
Jessica Coleman + Jake Lubarsky
Salena Copeland
Charlie Crompton
Christopher Crowley + Kate Crowley Richardson
Shashi and Dipanjan ("DJ") Deb
Juliane Diamond
Casey + Pablo Federico
Miki Fire

Adena Friedman
Julie + Rafael Gamboa
Marisa Giller
Sarah Grossman-Swenson
Gay Grunfeld
Margaret Hagan
Rebecca Herman
Norbert "Bisco" + Erin Hill
Allan Jergesen
Heidi Kong
Evan Kuluk
Jay Laney + Donna Aylsworth
Bianca Ling + Igor Liskovets
Abbey + Ellie Lisowski
Naomi Loo
Jennifer Lucky
Bryan Malong
Claire McDonnell
Elise McNamara
Eli Miller + Chessie Thacher
Barbara Mitchell
Karina Moreno
Adriana Neal
Nelson Allen Family
Nancy Nelson + Jim McNamara
Michael Pappone + Diane Savitzky

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The Deborah L. Rhode Fund
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Kaylie Simon
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Sacha + Joshua Steinberger
Nicholas Stephens
Lindsay Stevens
Abby Sullivan Engen
Jonah + Lesley Swick
Amy Whelan + Eleanor Morton



van Löben Sels/RembeRock Foundation



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 HONORED TO WORK WITH OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND DEDICATED COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKERS, FELLOWS, AND AMBASSADORS. THANK YOU TO LEGAL LINK STAFF, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ADVISORY BOARD, INTERNS, AND VOLUNTEERS FOR MAKING THIS WORK POSSIBLE.

2023 TRAINING PARTNERS

Bay Area Community Services
Booker T. Washington Community Service Center
Brilliant Corners
Canal Alliance
Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County
Center for Human Services
Change SF
City of Sacramento Department of Community Response
Community Legal Education Ontario
College Track
Community Against Sexual Harm
Compass Family Services
Eden United Church of Christ
Family Promises
Five Keys
Freedom Forward
Glide Memorial United Methodist Church
Hamilton Families
Homeless Prenatal Program
HomeRise
Larkin Street Youth Services
LifeMoves
Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation
Opportunity Junction
ParentChild+
Rocketship Education
Roots Community Health Center
Rosie's Place
Ruby's Place
Sacramento County Department of Health Services
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Saved by Grace
Seneca Center
Sequoia Living San Francisco Senior Community
SF Marin Food Bank
SF State Guardian Scholars Program
Shelter Inc.
Shine Together Inc.
SOMOS Mayfair
The Women's Building

NAVIGATOR FELLOWS + ALUMNI

Jesus Aguilar - 2023, Compass Family Services
Adrian Avila - 2023, Bay Area Community Services
Adriana Beltran - 2023, Compass Family Services
Andrew Crater - 2023, Homeless Prenatal Program
Daniela Flores - 2023, The Women's Building
Melanie Mireles - 2023, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County / ParentChild+
Melanie Young - 2023, Homeless Prenatal Program
Maria Arribas - 2022, Hamilton Families
Tiara Davis - 2022, Homeless Prenatal Program
Arel Gonzalez - 2022, Homeless Prenatal Program
Jacqueline Molinero Gutierrez - 2022, Compass Family Services
Sujey Ruiz - 2022, Homeless Prenatal Program
Susana Sandoval - 2022, Hamilton Families
Oscar Aparicio - 2021, Homeless Prenatal Program
Montez Brooks - 2021, Compass Family Services
Traci Cook - 2021, Homeless Prenatal Program
Clark Wininger - 2021, Compass Family Services

AMBASSADORS

- Rebecca Smith - 2023 Ambassador, Compass Family Services
- Melanie Young - 2023 Ambassador, Homeless Prenatal Program
- Hanna Debsai - 2023 Ambassador, Homeless Prenatal Program
- Melissa Aceves - 2022, Compass Family Services
- Liz Lawton - 2022, Homeless Prenatal Program
- Peyton Yen - 2022, Compass Family Services

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Margaret Hagan - Director of Legal Design Lab and Lecturer, Stanford Law School

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- Kiran Sidhu - Golden 1 Credit Union
- Evonne Silva - Consultant

LEGAL FELLOWS, INTERNS + VOLUNTEERS

- Aurash Gomroki, LFSN Fellow 2023
- Anna Holt, Legal Intern 2023
- Kevin Navi, Legal Intern 2023
- Samantha Perez, Intern 2023

LEGAL LINK STAFF

- Kate Crowley Richardson, Co-Executive Director
- Lillian Kang, Staff Attorney
- Lauren Lofton, Senior Staff Attorney
- Wendy Lopez, Program Manager
- Sacha Steinberger, Founder & Co-Executive Director