



Impact Report

2021–2022

Legal Services of Northwest Jersey

We offer free legal help to eligible people.

Our clients live in the five northwest counties of New Jersey: Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex and Warren.

We staff offices in the County Seats of each County. All of our staff and administration contribute to meet the needs of our clients throughout the region.

LSNWJ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity in the delivery of services.



Our Clients



Our clients are people like working families who face financial challenges.

Our clients are people with illness, disabilities or loss of employment, which limit their earnings.

Our clients are people who need public entitlements like SSD/SSI, TANF, Medicaid and SNAP food benefits.

Our clients are people aged 60+ whom we serve under Title III.

Our clients are veterans and their families.

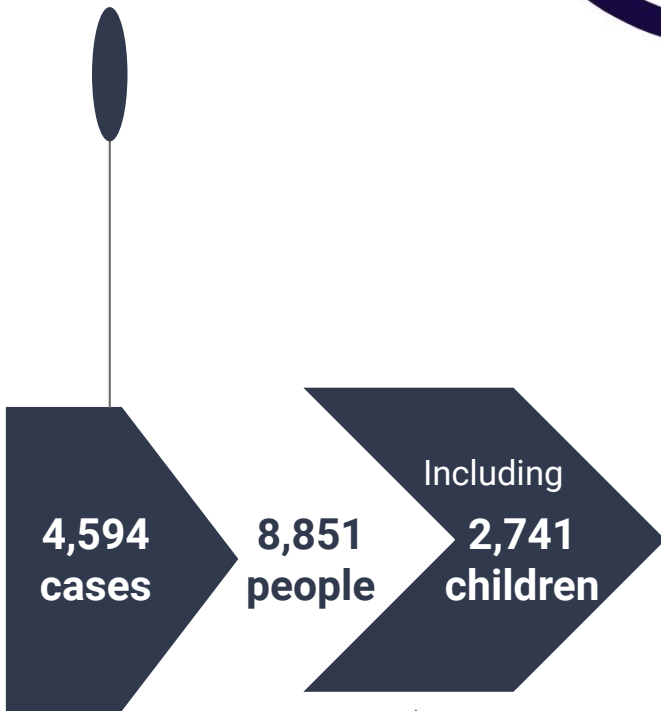
Our clients may be separated from their families and finances by abuse.



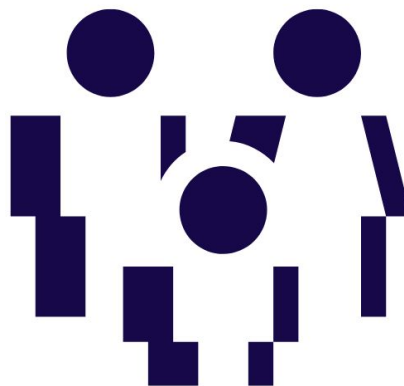
In 2021, we handled 4,594 cases, helping 8,851 people.



In 2022, we helped 11,950 people in 5,766 cases.



In 2021, 2,741 minor children were helped by our legal assistance to families.



In 2022, 3,842 minor children were helped by our legal assistance to families.

In 2022, 96% of clients provided with legal representation by LSNWJ were successful in meeting their essential needs.

In 2021, 97% of clients provided with legal representation by LSNWJ succeeded in meeting their essential needs.



Legal Services of Northwest Jersey offers legal advice and services such as document preparation, as well as extended representation in matters in court and before administrative agencies.

We provide these legal services with qualified and trained staff attorneys and pro bono counsel.

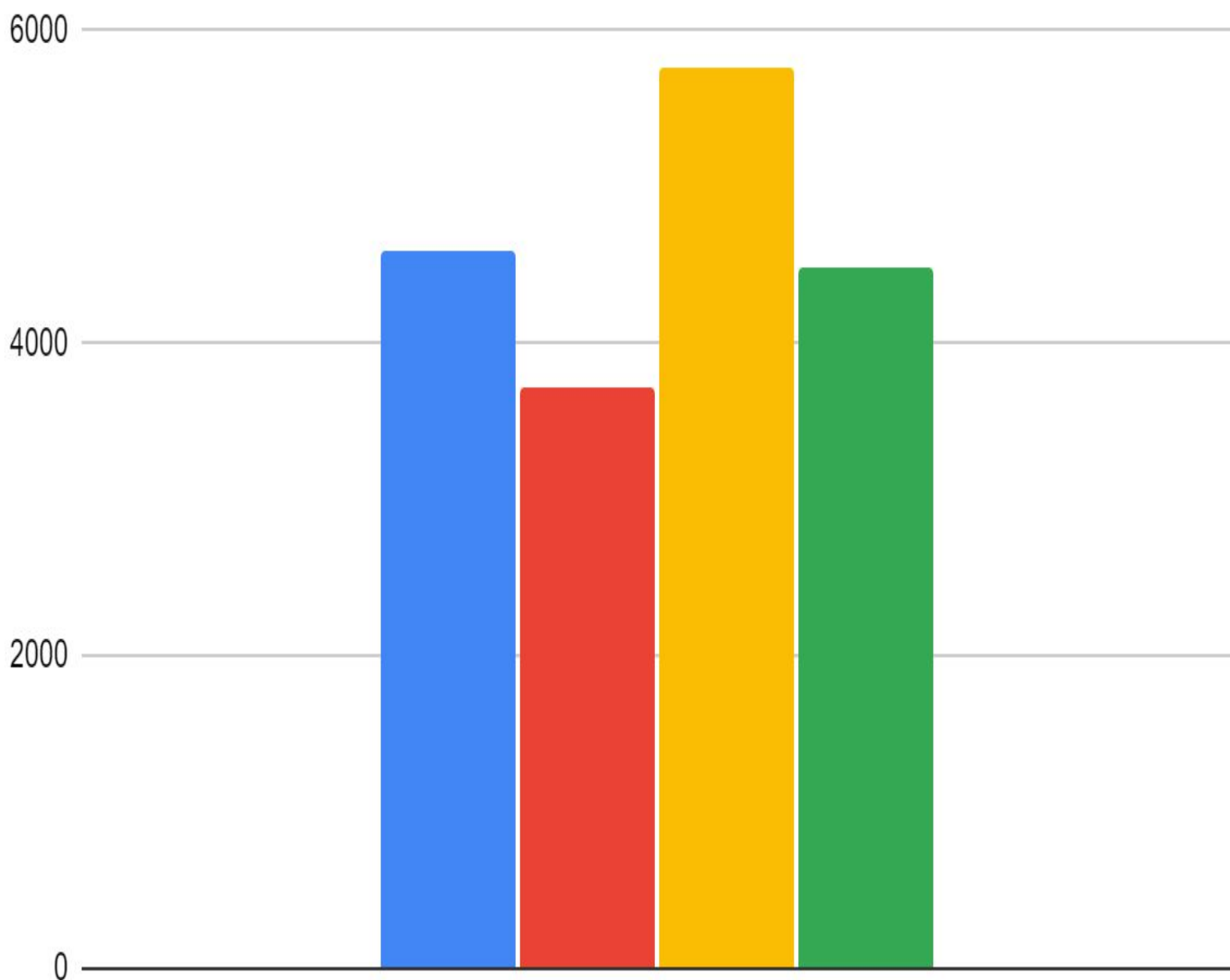
We prioritize equal access to justice to protect our clients' basic essential needs:

- INCOME AND ASSETS
- SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE
- FAMILY STABILITY AND PERSONAL SAFETY
- LIFE WITH DIGNITY IN THE COMMUNITY

All Cases Handled vs New Cases Opened, 2021 vs 2022



■ 2021 total cases handled ■ 2021 new cases opened ■ 2022 total cases handled
■ 2022 new cases opened



Legal Services for Basic Essential Needs, Delivered through Substantive Law Teams

What we do

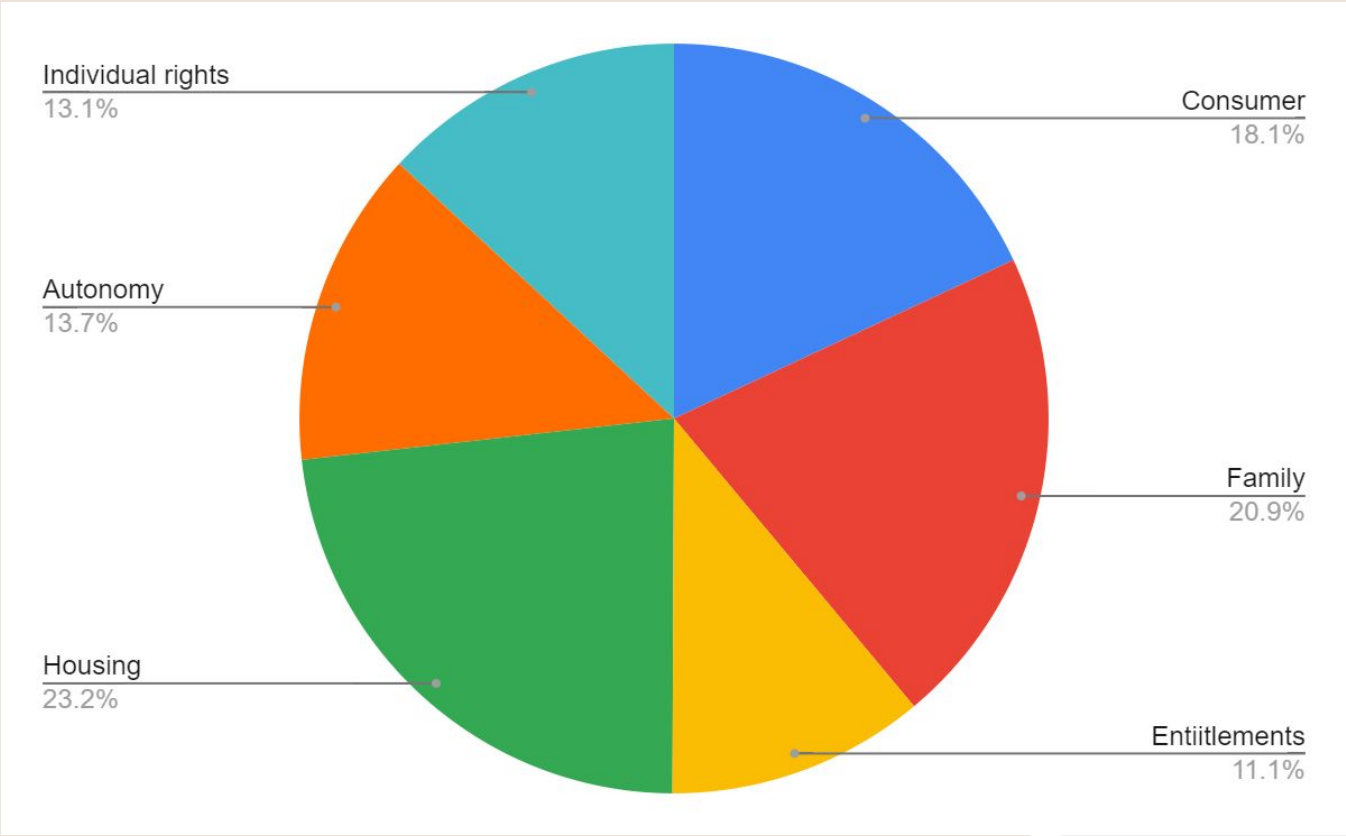
- “Family” matters include:
 - Custody
 - Support
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Divorce/Separation
 - Paternity
- “Autonomy” matters include:
 - Wills
 - Powers of Attorney
 - Advance Directives
 - Guardianship
- “Public Entitlements” included:
 - Medicaid
 - Govt. Childrens’ Health
 - Home care
 - Social Security Benefits
 - Temporary Aid to Needy Families
 - Food Stamps
 - Unemployment Benefits*
 - COVID-19 benefits*
 - Other income maintenance
- “Individual Rights” included:
 - Mental Health involuntary commitment*
 - Driver’s License restoration
 - Expungement of criminal records
- “Consumer” matters include:
 - Bankruptcy
 - Debt collection
 - Contracts/warranties
 - Credit and loans
 - Utilities
 - Foreclosure
 - Taxes
 - Torts
 - Home Ownership
- “Housing” includes:
 - Landlord/Tenant
 - Public Housing
 - Subsidized Housing
 - Housing Discrimination

*In 2023 our services regarding pandemic benefits and UE concluded

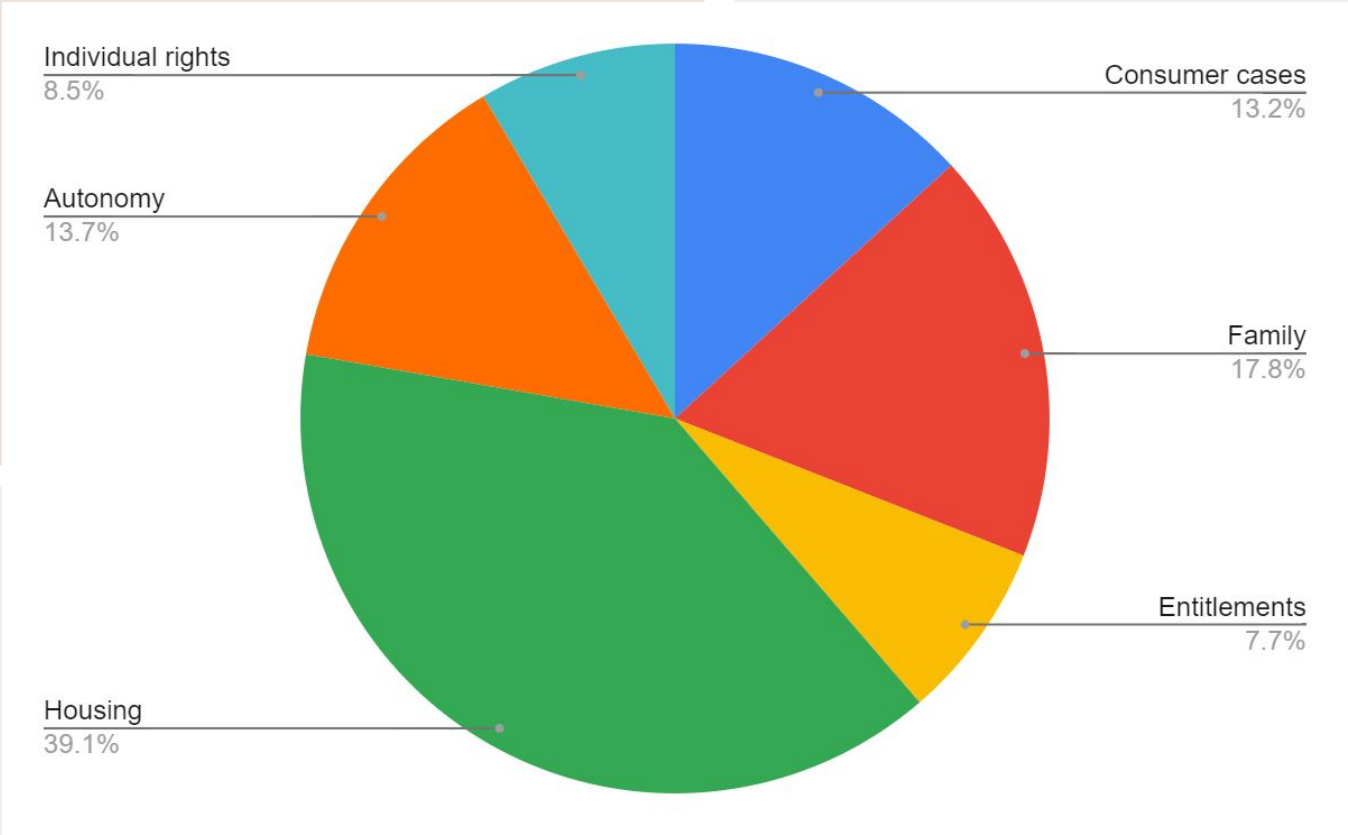
*In 2023 we ended our Morris County contract for representation in commitment matters and the Office of the Public Defender now represents in commitments

Cases Handled

2021



2022



2021 – Debt collection cases resume in the Courts

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact our community. The closing of courts, eviction moratorium and moratorium on suspension of Medicaid benefits had limited applicants' access of services, and reduced case numbers in areas involving litigation.

- ★ LSNWJ continued with our expansion of services to meet the current needs. The Public Entitlements Team continued its Unemployment Benefits/Pandemic Unemployment Advice Panel, which had been initiated the preceding year.
- ★ The Courts modified landlord tenant rules with new case management and conferencing initiatives. The Housing Team continued community education, legal advice and representation in an effort to connect tenants with resources and divert evictions.
- ★ LSNWJ's Board of Trustees formed a Pro Bono Team with staff to train pro bono counsel, in anticipation of an ultimate tsunami of eviction cases.
- ★ Planning an extension of services in the expungement of criminal records, staff went into the community with legal information for the public, and legal education for attorneys and volunteers.
- ★ LSNWJ Outreach continued online, outdoors and on the road. A staff liaison joined Morris County's Hope Hub, in a new project to go out to find the need, and connect people to services.
- ★ The organization grew, with six new hires to meet the anticipated growth of demand for legal services, as pent up demand for suit by creditors, landlords and agencies would create case and time pressures for clients and advocates.
- ★ LSNWJ strengthened its leadership capacity and succession planning with the addition of a Chief Operating Officer.

Expenses

In 2021, **90%** of LSNWJ resources supported program work.

The expense for Program Management, Administration, and Fundraising increased from 10% to **15%** in 2022, still a spare fraction of the overall budget.

In 2021 LSNWJ hired a Director of Operations, **Sharon J. L. Yoo, Esq.** As her role has developed, her title has become **Chief Operating Officer and Director of Pro Bono.**

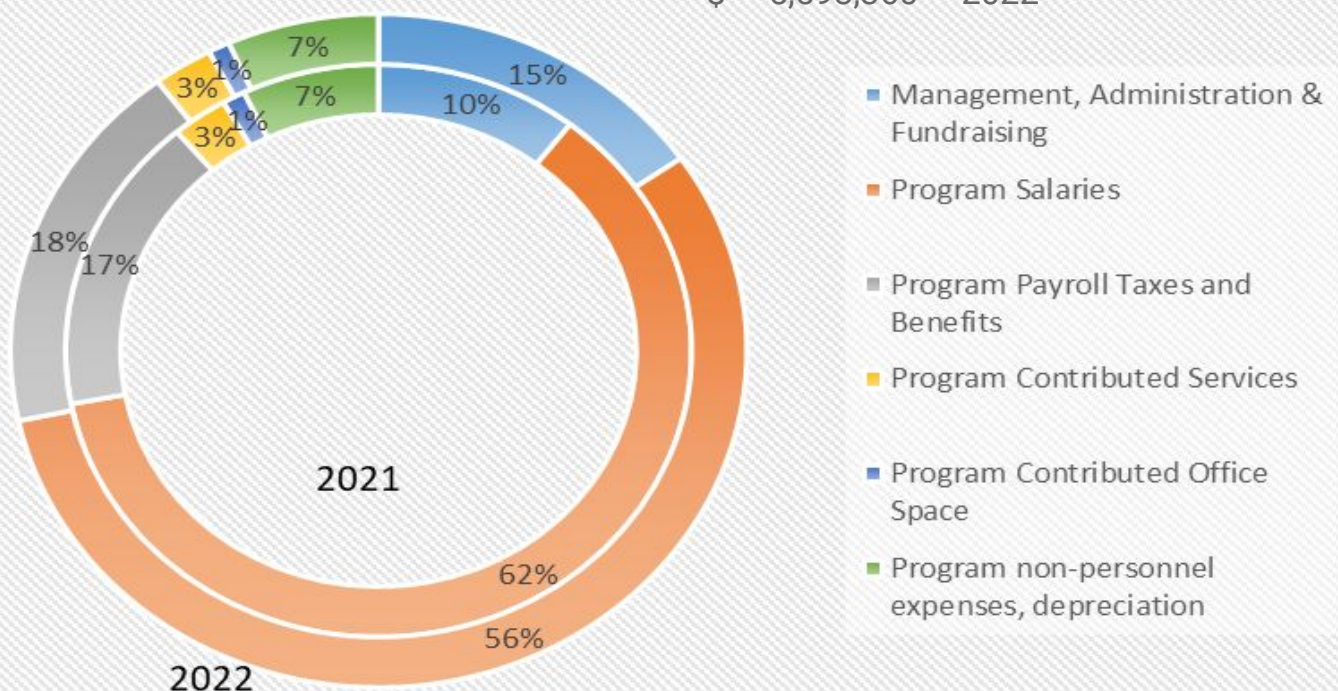
Leadership is critical to maintaining focus on mission, assuring quality, meeting grant requirements, and securing new funding.

Sharon J. L. Yoo, Esq. and CEO Michael L. Wojcik, Esq.



Expenses

Total: \$ 4,801,242 2021
\$ 5,593,360 2022



2021 –
LSNWJ launched a
new English and
Spanish website:
www.lsnwj.org

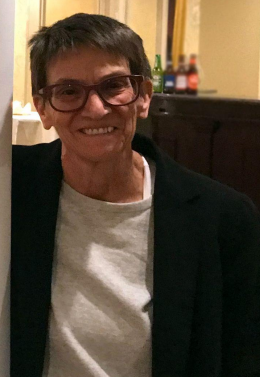


2022 –
LSNWJ implemented
online intake

Apply Now for Legal Help



Family Team Leader Elizabeth Szabo, Esq.,
retired after a lifetime career as a legal
services attorney with the organization.



The first in-person,
all-staff
education and
team-building event,
since the pandemic's
onset in 2020, was held
outdoors in May.

2022 – Eviction matters return to the court's docket

While teams continued extending more advice services on credit repair, small claims, and unemployment benefits, LSNWJ recognized the urgent priority of cases involving

- ★ Tenancy eviction defense, especially in subsidized housing;
- ★ Illegal/Self Help evictions, including utility shut offs by the landlord;
- ★ Notice of Termination of housing subsidy;
- ★ Ejectment defense.
- ★ The Housing Team commenced rotation of on call attorney coverage for response to housing emergency cases.
- ★ Staff and pro bono all contributed in LSNWJ eviction diversion clinics. These were held day or evening at local library branches and virtually through Zoom.
- ★ Morris County Superior Court held a weeklong “blitz” of trials to clear its eviction case backlog. The Court scheduled 225 eviction cases to be heard over one week in April. It took a program-wide effort as staff from multiple county offices assisted local attorneys to meet the needs of tenants in court.
- ★ The year's end would conclude the LSNWJ contract for representation in mental health involuntary commitments to a psychiatric hospital. In 2023, these clients would have Public Defender representation. The conclusion of commitments representation frees staff to respond to the pressure of increased need in anti-eviction work and consumer debt defense.
- ★ Staff returned to work in-office on hybrid schedules.
- ★ New technology needs resulted in a roll-out to all staff of Zoom phones through computers, maintaining efficiency from remote locations. LSNWJ's IT is administered by LSNJ, the statewide coordinator of legal services in New Jersey.
- ★ LSNWJ hosted six CLE webinars over three months, on bankruptcy, tenancy law, and expungements, for staff and pro bono.
- ★ New hires: 6 attorneys, 2 intake specialists, 1 Paralegal, 1 Social Worker, 1 Executive Admin. Assistant.



Flooding from Hurricane Ida in September 2021 hit our area hard.

A grant from AARP Foundation supported LSNWJ hire of a Social Worker in 2022 to help disaster survivors 50+ access services.



Eviction diversion: 2021 trained pro bono lawyers

2022: LSNWJ held outreach events for tenants, at libraries, in the community

Funders

Legal Services of Northwest Jersey
is grateful for the funding and
support of

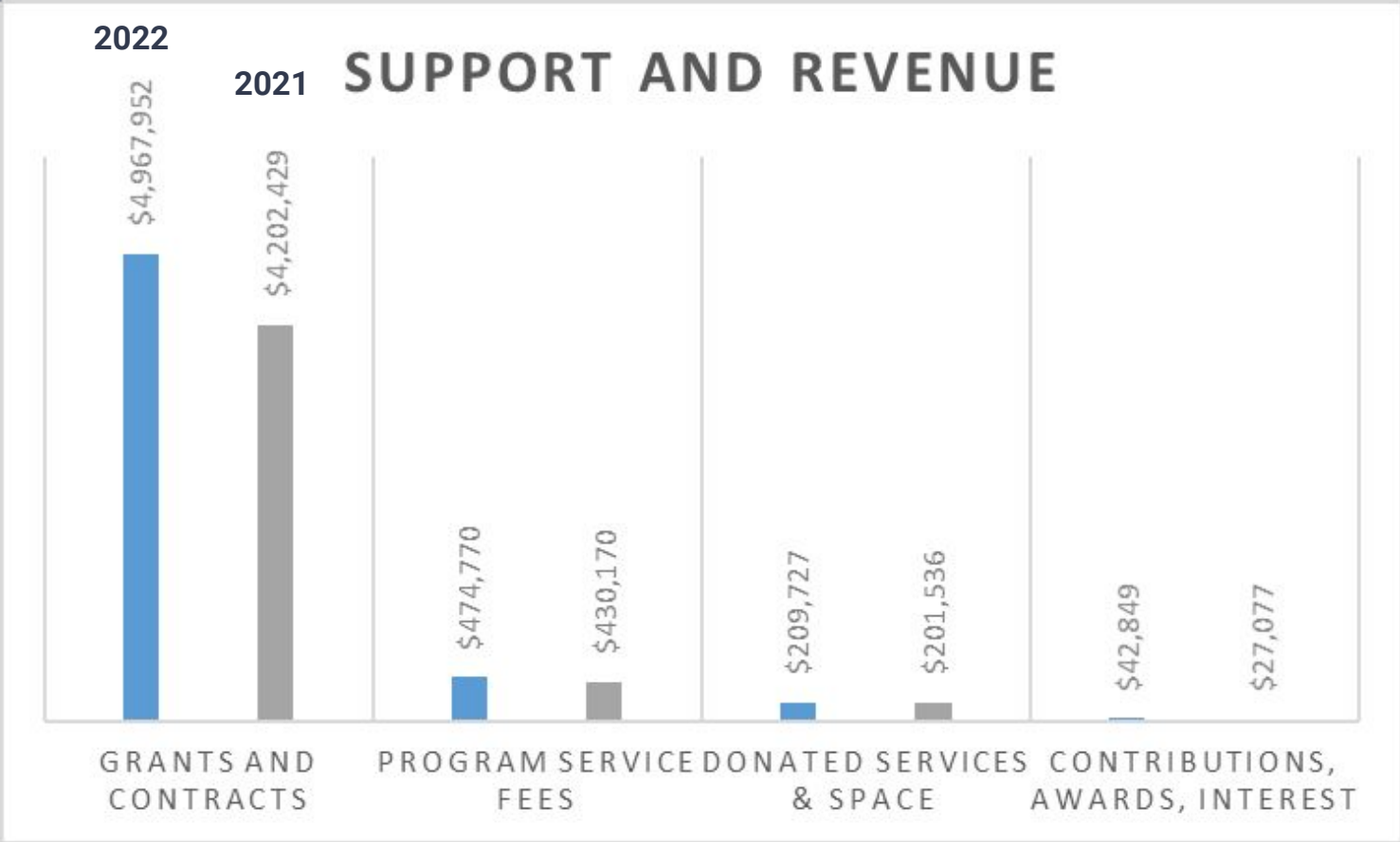
- ★ the Legal Services Corporation,
- ★ the State of New Jersey, the Counties of Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren,
- ★ our corporate sponsors,
- ★ foundation funders and individual donors,
- ★ and our volunteers.



Total Support and Revenue

2022: \$ 5,695,298

2021: \$ 4,861,212



Pro Bono Eviction Diversion



Older Americans Day
Sussex County



Staff Training



CLE expungements,
autonomy, housing



Eviction Diversion

LSNWJ Board of Trustees 2021 & 2022

Mary Ellen Koscs-Fleming, Esq.
(President 2022)
Appointed by
Hunterdon County Bar Association

Diane S. Margolin, Esq. (President 2021,
Vice-President 2022)

Appointed by
Warren County Bar Association

Erin Buchalter (Secretary 2022)
Appointed by SAFE in Hunterdon

Mark Hontz, Esq. (Treasurer 2022)
Appointed by
Sussex County Bar Association

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Samantha Levalley
Appointed by Project Self-Sufficiency

John C. Pierce, Esq. (2022)
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Morris County Bar Association

Verne Johnson (2022)
Appointed by Raritan Valley
Community College

Jully Myers (2022)
Appointed by Good News Home for
Women

Sharon Small, Esq. (2022)
Appointed by
Garden State Bar Association

Kevin Ku, Esq. (New nomination 2022)

Helen Anane (2021)
(Executive Committee)
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Raritan Valley Habitat For Humanity

William J. Lovas, Esq. (2021)
Appointed by
Morris County Bar Association

Dennis W. Winegar, Esq. (2021)
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Warren County Bar Association

Elizabeth H. Smith, Esq. (2021)
Appointed by
Morris County Bar Association



Michael L. Wojcik,
Chief Executive Officer

Kevin J. Morrissey,
Chief Financial Officer

Sharon J. L. Yoo,
Chief Operating Officer
and Director of Pro Bono

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<https://www.lsnwj.org/newsletter>

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LSC

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