Legal Services of Northwest Jersey

Providing Equal Justice
In Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex and Warren Counties
www.lsnwj.org

Michael L. Wojcik, Esq., Chief Executive Officer

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Our mission is to enable equal access to justice to people who cannot afford an attorney, ensuring that all individuals have the legal support they need to protect their essential needs and achieve self-sufficiency.

DATE:	November 2026
PRESENTED BY:	Michael L. Wojcik, Chief Executive Officer

In 2025, a government shutdown and threats to LSC funding caused uncertainty throughout the community, but we thrived in our continuing work for equal justice, thanks to the commitment of our funders and staff.

More of our staff rose to meet the challenge of leadership opportunities within our organization. Our focus on team leadership prioritizes efficient delivery of the highest quality legal services for clients.

Leadership for Addressing the Needs of Unique Client Populations

Family Justice Center

LSNWJ Attorney Melissa Kiefer was named the Survivor Advocacy & Partnerships Team Leader. As Team Leader, Melissa spends 80% of her time providing legal assistance to clients referred to LSNWJ by the Morris County Family Justice Center ("FJC"), as well as maintaining the collaborative relationship we have with FJC. The Center is sited at the

Morris County Court House for accessibility by domestic abuse victims and survivors.

For the balance of Melissa's professional time, she engages in outreach and collaboration with domestic abuse service providers in LSNWJ's other four counties.

Melissa Kiefer, Randy Yang, Jonathan Tolentino, 12/2025



Community Health Team

Our attorney Jonathan Tolentino was promoted to the Community Health Team Leader position. Jonathan continues in his fine work on the Housing and Entitlements Teams, while supporting our community health initiatives and coordinating with colleagues in all five counties.

Jonathan was also recognized by his legal services colleagues across the State through LSNJ's 2025 *Rising Star Award*, as was LSNWJ Intake Specialist, Lisa Manno.

More Staff Recognized

LSNWJ Legal Assistant, Gladys Gil, received LSNJ's *Mary J. Dryer Award for Career Service to People in Poverty*. Entitlements Team Leader Andrea Strack, Esq., was recognized as the recipient of LSNJ's *Maura Sanders Entitlement Advocacy Award.*

With the second retirement of our legal services career star, Gerald R. Brennan, a new LSNJ award was named in his honor to preserve his significant legal legacy: the *Gerald R. Brennan Outstanding Achievements in Advocacy Award*. Gerry had returned from retirement on a part-time basis as an advocate to pitch in on behalf of many clients most in need of help. Gerry was properly recognized as the first honoree of the award. We remain grateful for his continuing inspiration as a leader among legal services greats.

Well Trained Leaders for a Multi-Generational Workplace

We are a recognized CLE provider throughout the bar community, and regularly provide training for all staff on substantive law and on the competencies required for superior delivery of services to clients, courts and within teams.

In 2025, our Managers and Team Leaders engaged with trainers in the areas of emotional intelligence, and on working with co-workers and others from different generations. During a working lunch, participants analyzed our firm's internal and external Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT).

MIE Directors Conference, Chicago, March 26 to 28

CEO Michael Wojcik, with Sharon J.L. Yoo, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Pro Bono, attended Management Information Exchange's Directors Conference in Chicago. The conference theme for trainings and discussion with legal services colleagues across the nation addressed Leadership in Uncertain Times.

Fostering the Next Generation of Advocates

Staff Attorney Erin C. Connolly stepped up to join Staff Attorney Yvonne Larsen's oversight of the LSNWJ Summer Internship Program. The program provides training of interns and coordinates their rotation among offices and areas of practice. The object is to provide each intern with real life legal services experience and some understanding of the challenges and highlights of our work.



Law School interns, Andreas, Bradley, Fiyin

Their success is evident in our welcoming three Poritz fellows for the summer of 2025, with the happy return of two prior interns as rising third year law students.

Finance Team

CFO Kevin J. Morrissey attended LSC's CFO bootcamp at LSC's offices in Washington, DC in September.

New Staff Accountant Position

Priyasha Ghosh joined LSNWJ in April as a staff accountant. Priya has a Bachelors and Masters in Commerce from J.W.C. Ranchi University in Jharkhand, India, and an intermediate chartered accountancy degree from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, which is considered the equivalent of an MBA. She has worked for seven years as an accounting professional with companies primarily in financial accounting and administration.

Maintenance

New windows, blinds and paint were in order for our Sussex County office in Newton. The Warren County office in Belvidere warranted some interior repairs and new air conditioning units. Volunteers from Blair Academy help with landscape maintenance annually at the Warren County office.

We want our guests to feel comfortable and respected, as well as our staff in their hard work. We like

the small town feel of our offices, even as we update and modernize.



Our Sussex County LSWNJ office at 18 Church Street, Newton.

Valuing Staff

Our staff encounter applicants and clients daily who are suffering, may be desperately grasping for their last safety net, with many legal problems and needs. Staff must meet each person where they are, explain challenges, sometimes give bad news, and still be able to think creatively and summon a fresh perspective to calculate legal options.

To foster the highest quality professional, compassionate client service, we recognize the needs of our staff to avoid burnout with team building and supportive self-care.

Summer Fridays

For the second year in a row, LSNWJ continued its experiment with summer Fridays from July 10 to August 29. Each Friday, half of the staff ended the day early.

Staff working on a summer Friday met the challenge of stepping in to ensure coverage so that summer Fridays work for LSNWJ's clients as well as our staff.

All-Staff Events

In addition to monthly staff meetings and training webinars, LSNWJ holds three all-staff, all-office, in-person events annually: in the Fall, in the Spring, and in December with the final Board meeting. Many of these include a training or workshop component, but we also make time for being together and building the team.

Our 2025 Spring outing brought staff together to play at Top Golf.



Reaching Out to Inform and Educate

Outreach is important in our work. As long as we have been around, and with so many clients who refer their family and friends in need, we still find so many people and agencies who don't know about all the services we offer. Sometimes people don't understand they may have legal options for a given problem

overwhelming them. Our lawyers, paralegals, Access Team, and pro bono counsel help us get the word out.

At outreach events, we tell people about how to access legal services and other resources, and help people identify the legal issues in so many problems. We discover new and underserved communities, and learn about community needs.

At community education events, we help inform people about their rights and legal responsibilities. We share information on accessing the court system and obtaining legal relief.

At clinic events and "office hours" at the sites of other providers, we interview applicants and begin casework for new clients, complete a consultation with legal advice, or prepare a legal document.

Our experienced staff offer outreach and education to the public in webinars and at events. They also educate community providers about the law, the ways we can help their clients, and about how the people they serve can access legal help.

Agencies with whom LSNWJ staff conducted Outreach Events in 2025

Morris, Somerset, Sussex County Landlord Tenant Courts

Veteran's Haven North office hours

Zufall Health Center office hours, Dover and Morristown

Morris Hope Hub
Senior Network, Warren County
Continuum of Care Committee
Job Fair at County College of Morris
Seniors Fair, Warren County
Sussex County Fair, Seniors Day
Hunterdon County Fair Housing
Older Americans Day, Sussex County
Get to Know Dover Day
Project Homeless Connect
Salvation Army
DASACC
Somerset Caregivers Event
Hope One Symposium
4Caregiver Expo
Dover Back to School Fair
Clean Slate 2.0 Expungement Clinic
Program Career Fair
Caregiver Expo, Sussex County
Hunterdon County Veterans Fair
Morris County Community Resource Exchange

Constituent Resource Fair,
Senator Andy Kim

Morris/Sussex Vicinage,
JOBS Program Career Fair

Somerset/Hunterdon/Sussex Human Services Advisory Committees

Statewide Housing and Eviction Working Group

Hunterdon County Aging/Disability Resource Connection

Warren County Annual Health & Wellness Field Day

Warren County Veteran Resources Expo
Judiciary, Law Enforcement and DV Personnel Training on ROs

Butler Senior Housing
Community Education

Ombudsmen's Office,
Expungement Community Education

Health Camp, Center at Shree Swaminarayan Temple

Pro Bono





Because counsel want to give back, lawyers come to us seeking opportunities to do work for the public good. We do outreach and training to lawyers, law firms and corporations, to invite their help in pro bono work for our client community.

Students, retirees and others also volunteer to work with us at our offices, or at outreach events.

We supported volunteers with trainings and with pro bono events providing legal services, like these:

Pro Bono Events and Achievements

Merck interpreters in Landlord Tenant Court
Merck intake & representation in Landlord Tenant Court

Intro to Pro Bono to Kennedys
Pro Bono Expungement Training to Kennedys
Expungement Pro Bono Clinic, with Kennedys, at Nourish NJ

Pro Bono Training for Merck on Autonomy Documents
Merck, Autonomy Clinics for Veterans, at Lyons, VA Hospital

Pro Bono Autonomy Clinics with Merck, at Morris County Housing Authority

Homebuyer Workshop,
Central Jersey Housing Resource Center,
with Board Trustee, Jane Herchenroder, Esq.

Updates to Tenancy Handbook,
Board Trustee, Sharon Small, Esq.

Veterans Justice Initiative, Lowenstein Sandler/LSNWJ partnership,
development of LSNWJ's Veterans Resource Manual

Patricia J. Cistaro, Esq., LSNWJ Trustee, center, received the Morris County Bar Association 2025 Pro Bono Award for her extensive contributions to pro bono legal services.



We attended the NJ State Bar Association pro bono awards event, LSNJ's Equal Justice Awards recognizing pro bono heroes, and local County Bar Association meetings and award events.

Our Board of Trustees held its first Retreat to consider best practices and hone its talents in leadership and oversight of LSNWJ.





Planning the Future

LSNWJ held a strategic planning meeting on November 19 at the Somerset Environmental Educational Center. Consultant Bonnie Duncan led the meeting with Board members, management, and team leaders in attendance.

After a lively and productive discussion, which had almost everyone on the same page regarding what success would look like for LSNWJ in three years, the participants identified four goals to achieve in the next three years:

- Grow and diversify funding;
- Recruit, develop, and retain staff;
- Identify and address client needs;
- Collaborate with and educate our stakeholders.

Working groups have been formed to build out how the goals will be accomplished and success will be measured. Working groups will be reconfigured into teams to work on a detailed written plan for implementation of the strategic plan.

The Year in Numbers

Financials

2025 Support and Revenue

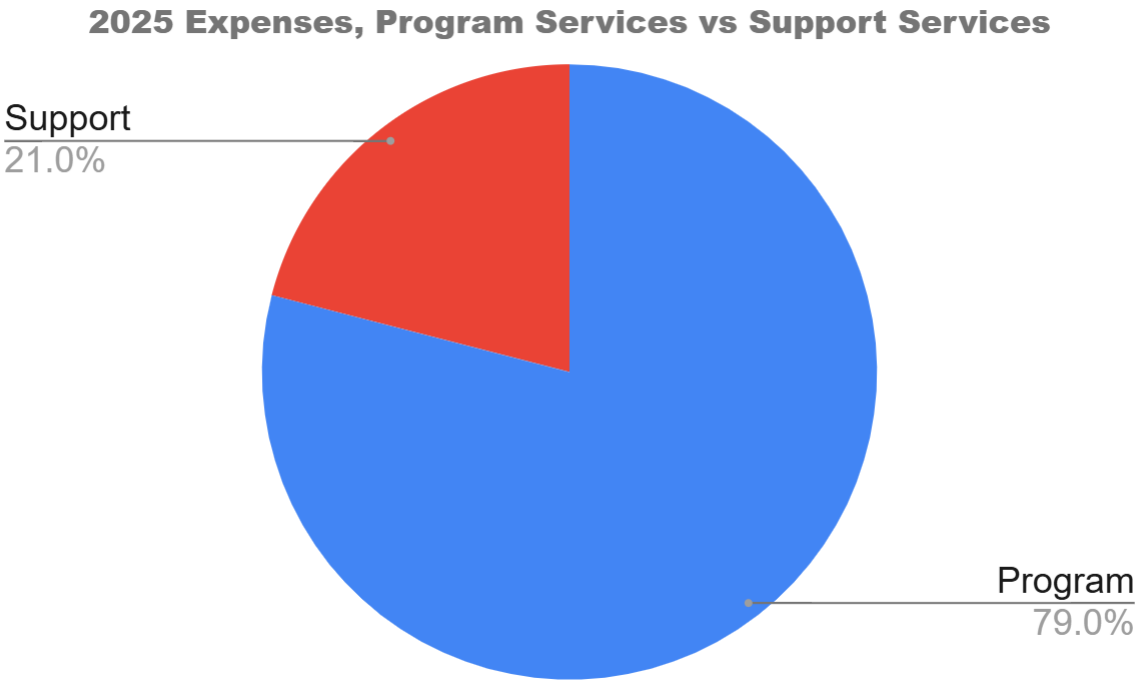
Grants and Contracts	$7,088,948
Contributions, Awards, Interest	$ 4,129
Contributed Services	$ 130,353
Contributed Space	$ 63,000
Interest Income	$ 19,862
Attorney Fee Awards	$ 1,200
Misc. Income	$ 2,803
Total Support & Revenues	$7,310,295

2025 Expenses

Program	
Operations, Program	$5,843,764
Property and Equipment, Program	$ 17,418
Total Expense Program Services	$5,861,182

Support	
Operations, Support	$1,551,894
Property and Equipment, Support	$ 4,666
Total Expense Support Services	$1,556,560

Total Expenses	**$7,417,742**



The People We Served

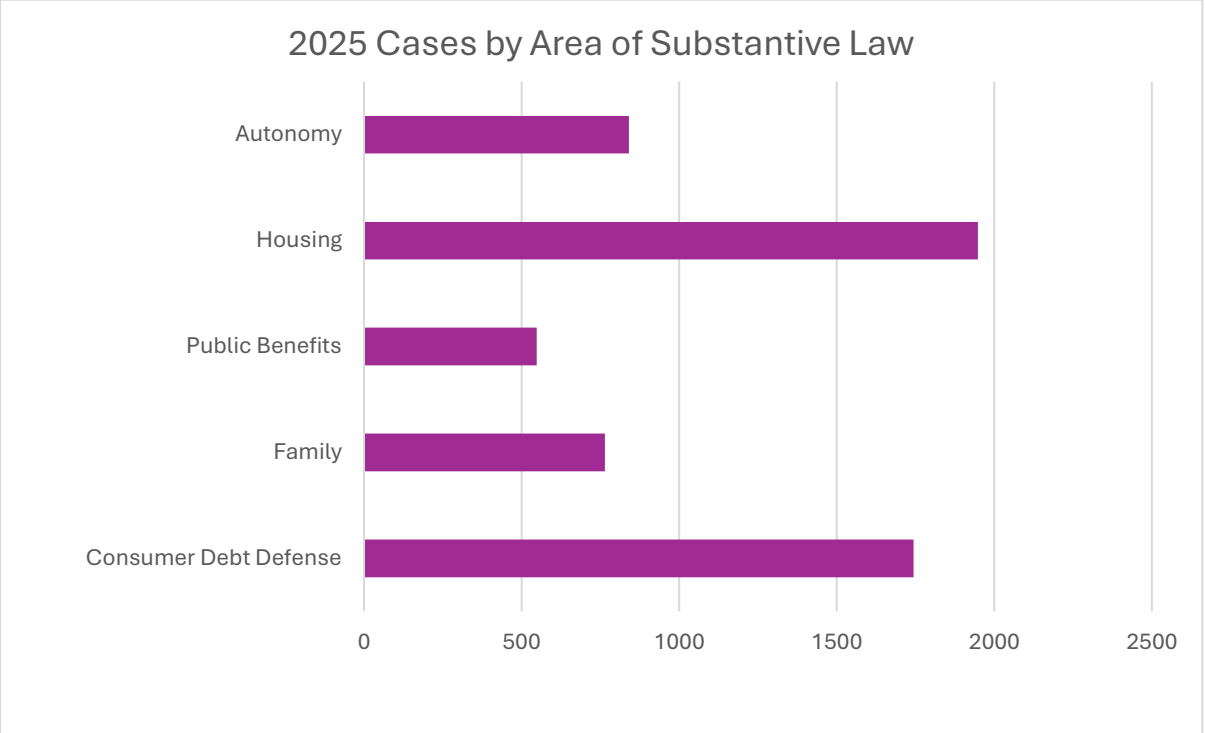
In 2025, 8053 people, in 5844 cases,
benefited from our legal services,
positively impacting 2665 children.



Our clients included 972 survivors of domestic violence;
1669 people of color; 2641 people with disabilities,
and 303 individual military members and veterans.

Many people in need suffer from multiple legal problems which need resolution through more than one case.

Legal Work



Housing: includes landlord/tenant, public and federally subsidized housing, and housing discrimination matters.

Consumer: includes bankruptcy and debtor relief; debt collection cases; contract and warranty matters; creditor harassment; loans; public utilities; taxes; home ownership issues, and mortgage foreclosures.

Family: includes custody and parenting time; divorce; domestic violence, and support.

Public Benefits: includes Medicaid and Medicare; Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF); Food Stamps (SNAP); State, Local and Other Income Maintenance; Social Security, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Unemployment Insurance Benefits; Veterans Benefits.

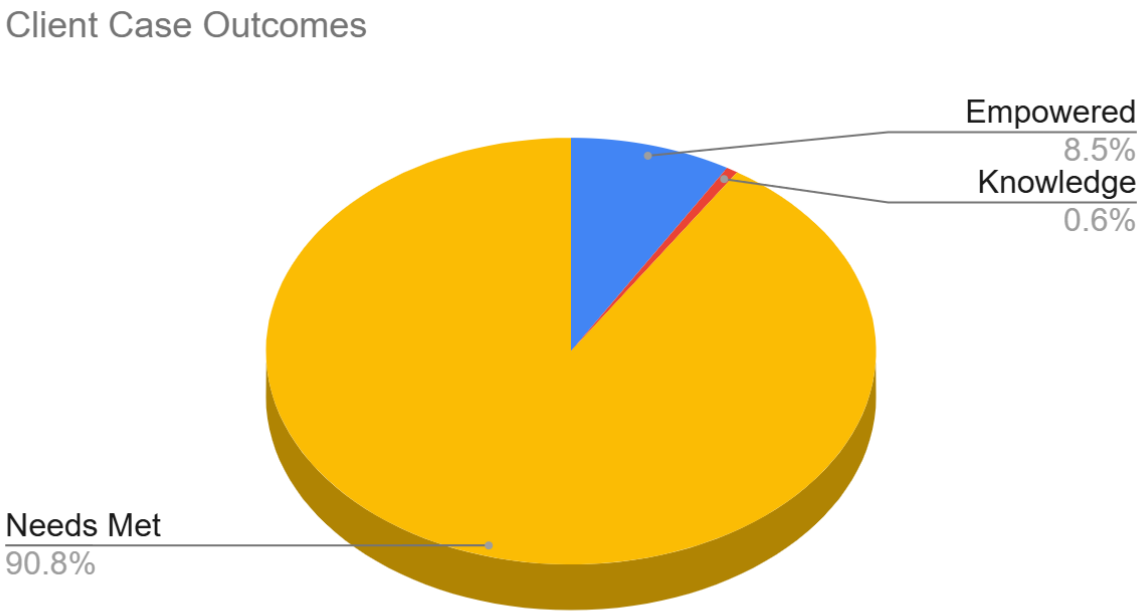
Autonomy: review and preparation of basic life planning documents including Wills, Advance Directives, and Powers of Attorney; expungement of criminal record; driver's license restoration; tort, and guardianship matters.

Results

Client Benefit Outcomes of Cases completed in 2025

For clients who received full representation, LSNWJ continues to meet or exceed its benchmarks for outcomes.

Over 90% of clients achieved their needs met, in matters concluded in 2025.



2025 LSNWJ Board of Trustees

MARY ELLEN KOSCS-FLEMING, Esq. (President) - Joined the Board in 2008; Merck Office of General Counsel (ret.); appointed by Hunterdon County Bar Association.

DIANE S. MARGOLIN, Esq. (Past President) - Joined the Board in 2003 until 2005, rejoined in 2009; Margolin & Neuner; appointed by Warren County Bar Association.

PATRICK T. COLLINS, Esq. - Joined the Board in 2003; Norris McLaughlin, P.A.; appointed by Somerset County Bar Association.

JANE A. HERCHENRODER, Esq. - Joined the Board in 2003; Law Office of Jane A. Herchenroder; appointed by Somerset County Bar Association.

JULLY MYERS - Joined the Board in 2022; Community Member; appointed by Good News Home for Women

SHARON SMALL, Esq. - Joined the Board in 2022; Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp; appointed by Garden State Bar Association.

JANET WALTON - Joined the Board in 2009; Community Member; appointed by Franklin Township Library.

KEVIN KU, Esq. (Secretary) - Joined the Board in 2022; Lyons & Associates; appointed by the Morris County Bar Association

ERIN BUCHALTER - Joined the Board in 2018; Community Member; Appointed by SAFE in Hunterdon.

MARK J. HONTZ, Esq. (Vice-President) - Joined the Board in 2019; Hollander Strelzik Pasculli Vandenberg Hontz & Associates, LLC; appointed by Sussex County Bar Association.

PATRICIA J. CISTARO, Esq. - Joined the Board in 2021; Cistaro Law, LLC; appointed by Morris County Bar Association

SAMANTHA LEVALLEY - Joined the Board in 2021; Community Member, appointed by Project Self-Sufficiency.

VERNÉ JOHNSON - Joined the Board in 2022; Community Member; appointed by Raritan Valley Community College.

JOHN C. PIERCE, Esq. (Treasurer) - Joined the Board in 2021; DeTorres and DeGeorge; appointed by Warren County Bar Association



2025 LSNWJ
Management and Leadership

MICHAEL L. WOJCIK, Chief Executive Officer

KEVIN J. MORRISSEY, Chief Financial Officer

SHARON J. L. YOO, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Pro Bono

CLAIRE M. CORSEY, Veterans Team Leader

COLLEEN M. CUNNINGHAM, Autonomy Team Leader

SCOTT H. DRANOFF, Managing Attorney

CARRIE B. FERRARO, Assistant Housing Team Leader

ALISA GROSSMAN, Managing Attorney

GRACE E. KELLY, Managing Attorney, Family Team Leader

MELISSA KIEFER, Survivor Advocacy & Partnerships Team Leader

YVONNE A. LARSEN, Unemployment Team Leader

RICHARD A. MASTRO, Consumer Team Leader

NANA ABENA A. OSAFO, Human Resources Director, Managing Attorney

VICTORIA A. REINERS, Managing Attorney

DAVID M. SALTZMAN, Housing Team Leader

ANDREA STRACK, Public Entitlements Team Leader

JONATHAN M. TOLENTINO, Community Health Team Leader

THERESA A. KIST, Access Team Leader, Office Manager

JENNIFER STOY, Human Resources and Accounts Payable Manager

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