Overview of Achievements

**Legal benefits obtained:** The Legal Aid Society of Rochester, NY (LASROC) provided direct legal representation in 7,550 cases. JustCause, as a subgrantee, reported 603 direct representation cases to LASROC for a total of 8,153 direct representation cases benefitting 26,167 people. Community legal education was provided by LASROC to 1,243 individuals and by JustCause to 1,402 individuals for a total of 2,645. IOLA’s Legal Benefit areas are met through LASROC’s five units: Family Law, Housing and Consumer Law, Immigration Law, Education Law, and the Attorney for the Child Unit, and through the work of JustCause. The majority of cases handled fall into Family, Housing, Consumer/Finance, Education, Immigration, and Juvenile benefit areas. In the Family benefit area, LASROC and JustCause provided representation in 5,974 cases, benefiting 20,984 people mostly in custody, protection from domestic violence, foster care services, and family reunification. In the Housing benefit area, we provided legal assistance in 894 cases which benefited 2,117 people. The majority of these cases were eviction prevention and eviction delay which benefited 1,637 people. In the area of Education law benefits, we provided legal assistance in 303 cases benefitting 1,077 people with the majority of cases in special education. In the Immigration benefit area, we provided representation in 290 cases benefitting 810 people. Immigration benefits included obtaining citizenship, employment authorization, adjustment of legal status, and obtaining non-immigrant status. There were 254 cases, benefitting 354 people in the Juvenile benefit area. In the Consumer/Finance benefit area we provided assistance in 197 cases benefitting 357 people.

**Target population:** Our target population consisted of low to moderate-income adults and children in Monroe, Steuben, Livingston, Genesee, Ontario, Orleans, and Wayne Counties. Our Immigration Unit serves all counties in Central and Western NY. LASROC clients reported an average income of $6,316 per year and identify as 45% Caucasian/White, 33% Black or African American, 17% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Multi-Racial, and 1% Asian or Pacific Islander. Seventy-one percent (71%) were under age 18, 27% were between the ages of 18 to 60 and 2% were over 60 years old. Of these clients, 945 were victims of domestic violence or elder abuse, 34 were veterans and 108 were undocumented immigrants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Served:</th>
<th>General Low Income Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area Served:</strong></td>
<td>Monroe County and Surrounding Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total IOLA Grant:</strong></td>
<td>$833,582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Staffing Full Time Equivalents:** | Total Staff: 94.85  
Lawyers: 47  
Paralegals: 6.6  
Other: 41.25 |
Overview of Achievements

**Financial Benefits Obtained:** LASROC and JustCause obtained a total of $446,197.34 in direct dollar benefits to our clients. This includes: $173,221.66 in child support; $35,538 in spousal support, $201,899.97 in equitable distribution; $32,674.71 in affirmative landlord/tenant judgements. We obtained $2,470,308.22 in benefits to clients in the form of judgments and payments avoided. The majority of these savings were from avoiding payments in: Landlord/tenant matters, $1,811,846.37; Bankruptcy, $595,471.04; and Foreclosure, $30,660.54.

**Direct Legal Services: Cases**

**Family Law:**
A domestic violence survivor came to LASROC’s Family Law Unit in 2019 for assistance with a family offense proceeding. She filed for an order of protection against her husband and he, in turn, filed one against our client and her son. We proceeded to trial, where his petitions were dismissed with prejudice. Our client received a final two-year order of protection however, her husband continued to violate the order. We helped our client file for child support in family court, successfully filed objections to the original child support order, and our client received almost double the amount granted initially. The Respondent was unhappy and filed over 60 baseless petitions in family court, including custody, visitation, writs of habeas corpus, and modifications to child support. LASROC’s Family Law Attorney filed multiple motions to dismiss these petitions. The motions were granted, but the Respondent was relentless in his filings.

Our Family Law Attorney went on to assist this client with divorce proceedings and made a motion to the presiding Judge that the Respondent/Defendant not be permitted to file any more petitions unless granted judicial approval. The Judge granted this request, and the Respondent is no longer able to file petitions unless the Judge grants him special approval.

While it is often beneficial for our clients to be able to file petitions in family court, unfortunately, as was the case here, it can be a form of abuse propagated by their abusers. The Respondent in this case abused the system for two years, depleting judicial resources and re-victimizing our client. Every time a new petition was filed, she was expected to take time off work and appear for the court appearance. Now, with this order, our client can live her life with her children, free from abuse and without repeated judicial intervention and disruption.
Direct Legal Services: Cases

Immigration:
An older adult from Cuba, a Legal Permanent Resident speaking only Spanish, approached LASROC seeking assistance with Naturalization. He was in danger of losing his social security and Medicaid benefits. This client was suffering from the early stages of memory loss and required a disability waiver for the naturalization exam. Our client was eager to learn and put in the necessary effort however, he was unable to retain the information needed to pass the exam. Our advocate worked with the client’s medical provider, who was largely unresponsive, to complete a disability waiver. At the client’s first naturalization interview the waiver was rejected, the USCIS Officer proceeded with the interview as per protocol, and our client was unsuccessful.

LASROC’s advocate was persistent in following up with the client’s primary medical provider and an additional provider who updated our client’s waiver after much back and forth. Unfortunately, at this point, our client now had quickly progressing dementia. At his second interview, the waiver for the exam was approved and LASROC’s advocate was able to serve as the client’s interpreter at his Oath Ceremony. Our client left the USCIS field office with his naturalization certificate. Obtaining his citizenship allowed this client to maintain his social security and Medicare benefits which were essential to him.
Other Services: Overview

In addition to direct services, LASROC provides community-based training to the community or to other non-profit providers. This training is conducted throughout the geographic service area mostly in the areas of family law, immigration, education law, and housing. A total of 1,291 people received community legal education from LASROC and JustCause staff in the 2021-2022 contract year. Presentation methods included in-person events, interactive online presentations via Zoom and Facebook Live, and pre-recorded sessions on YouTube and Facebook.

As part of the domestic violence prevention training conducted in rural counties, clients receive brochures that describe our full array of services detailing how we may be able to help them in the future. An important piece to preventing future violence is a coordinated support system that includes legal and supportive services that LASROC provides with its community partners. Over 1,354 brochures were distributed at various human service agencies and available at all our in-person presentations. Victims of domestic violence and the organizations that support them were specifically targeted.

A total of 425 received services reported in "Other Pro Se Assistance." LASROC continued its Pro Se Divorce Project to assist unrepresented litigants properly complete and file their paperwork. Our target audience for this project is low-income individuals in Monroe and surrounding counties seeking an uncontested divorce. This program year we had 100 applicants working with us to ensure they are completing their divorce paperwork correctly.

JustCause provided pro se assistance to 325 individuals at their Virtual Help Center. In March of 2020, JustCause established a Virtual Help Center due to the courts and the public libraries being physically closed at the onset of the Covid crisis. In response to the community’s ongoing needs, JustCause developed the Virtual Help Center to continue services and help alleviate widespread confusion in the community regarding legal proceedings and how to get help during the Crisis. Using a live chat capability, pro bono attorneys and JustCause Staff answered legal information questions, provided court documents online, and completed virtual notarization requests.

### Number of People who Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
<td>2,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,326 People Benefitted by Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation
Other Services: Technology and Other Innovations

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and after taking staff feedback into consideration, LASROC instituted a hybrid work model, which continues today. Throughout the year, LASROC continued to upgrade and evaluate equipment needed for its staff and improved upon data security. While a hybrid workplace model has had its challenges, the integration of technology has allowed LASROC to represent clients in an efficient manner and has kept staff connected to each other. The ability to continue offering a remote option to clients has increased access to services for clients who are unable to visit our offices in person due to work, child care, or transportation barriers. Also improving client access is our online intake module, new last contact year. Online intake has become a popular method of applying for our services with 536 individuals submitting an online application in the 2021-22 contact year.

Other Services: Trainings

LASROC covers the cost of all Continuing Legal Education (CLE) to attorney staff and paralegals. Our administration staff attends finance, fundraising, marketing, human resources, and technology trainings that are available through their professional organizations. In the 2021-2022 program year, we provided 526 CLE credits via 157 CLE seminars. We held in-house training in the areas of sexual harassment, technology, COVID policy, and diversity and inclusivity. Each unit also provides relevant in-house training conducted by experienced staff or brings in experts in the field for unit-wide training. Training has included motion practice, law updates, and trial skills. This year we added a director level position that focuses on recruitment and Professional Development. Working with the Director of Recruitment and Professional Development is a Training Coordinator, a position filled by a Senior Attorney.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

During the 2021-22 contract year, LASROC hosted four law students who volunteered 511 hours, and 19 other volunteers including social workers, college students, and high school students who volunteered 2,620 hours. These individuals volunteered a total of 3,131 hours of their time. Under the direct supervision of LASROC staff, non-attorney volunteers receive substantive experience in the realm of legal services. Law students, who have completed 1-year of law school at an accredited college or university, are eligible for a judicial practice order. This order granted by the Fourth Department, allows law students to appear with clients in certain courts under the supervision of an attorney. LASROC is an approved Attorney Emeritus Program and has developed an Attorney Emeritus Project focused on retired attorneys representing tenants in Rochester City Court. The Covid-19 pandemic again delayed the start of Attorney Emeritus tenant representation.

JustCause offers a broad range of pro bono opportunities in a variety of service delivery formats that appeal to pro bono attorneys, law students, and other volunteers who are welcomed, trained, supported, and recognized on a regular basis by JustCause staff and board members. Levels of service range from providing legal information and referrals, to brief service and limited scope engagements, to extended representation in a complex matter. From April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, 289 pro bono volunteers donated over 4,000 hours of pro bono time through JustCause’s programs. Of these totals, 215 volunteers donated over 3,041 hours to cases and activities reported to the Legal Aid Society. 127 extended representation cases were referred to pro bono attorneys and 79 cases were closed with counsel and advice provided by pro bono attorneys at one of JustCause’s clinics.

500 Attorneys volunteered 2,615 hours

9 Law Students volunteered 641 hours

47 Other Volunteers volunteered 2,916 hours
Impact Cases

While LASROC does not provide Group Entity Representation, JustCause reporting the following:

The Neighborhood Alliance (name changed for privacy) contacted JustCause seeking advice on their Employee Manual. The organization is a small, grassroots nonprofit that operates in an underserved, urban area of the City of Rochester. The organization advocates anti-poverty initiatives, grows awareness and supports programs enhancing safety, education, nutrition and health, and play spaces for children, and supports locally owned businesses. The organization is looking to start a "tool lending library," a concept that has had huge success in Buffalo, NY, where they will offer the option to rent out up to five tools at a time for five days at a time for $25 a year. They recently hired a part-time coordinator for this project and wanted to have their Employee Manual reviewed.

JustCause registered the organization for a remote Micro-Entrepreneur Legal Clinic where they met with an experienced pro bono attorney from Nixon Peabody LLP, who reviewed their Employee Manual and provided advice and counsel. The attorney recommended that the agency undergo a more in-depth review of their manual and offered to take their case pro bono through JustCause outside of the clinic setting. The attorney is now helping the organization to review and draft changes to their Employee Manual. JustCause's Not-For-Profit Pro Bono Program is an important resource for micro-entrepreneurs in our community who would otherwise not have the means to obtain essential legal services they need to incorporate, operate effectively, sustain themselves and grow.

Significant Collaborations

LASROC and the main providers of civil legal services in Monroe County are co-located in the Telesca Center for Justice. Providers share a common reception area and contract with LASROC to provide in-person and telephone reception services. The reception area has a large child-specific waiting area and kiosks for clients to access information and complete online intake applications. LASROC collaborates with the Telesca Center partners in the substantive provision of legal services and in developing ways to increase access for our clients. LASROC also collaborates with several community-based organizations including Willow Domestic Violence Center, the YWCA in Monroe and Genesee Counties, and PathStone which works with the Family Law Unit on seamless service delivery to victims of domestic violence. LASROC’s Housing & Consumer Law Unit has a decade-long collaboration with Empire Justice Center, JustCause, and the Housing Council to represent clients in foreclosure.
Significant Collaborations

Additionally, we collaborate with LawNY, Empire Justice, and JustCause on the Tenant Defense Project. The Tenant Defense Project provides a streamlined intake for all providers via a hotline and an online intake. LASROC also collaborates with PathStone and the Housing Council at PathStone, two local not-for-profit development corporations that provide first-time homebuyer education and housing assistance through presentations to first-time home buyers and at landlord/tenant information sessions. LASROC’s Immigration Program has maintained a long-established collaboration with both Hiscock Legal Aid Society in Syracuse and The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY to provide immigration law services across New York State. Additionally, LASROC’s Immigration Law Unit formally collaborates with JustCause, Catholic Charities Family and Community Services, Volunteer Lawyers Project and Journey’s End, both out of Buffalo, NY. Our Education Law Unit collaborates with several initiatives including the Mental Health Education Advocacy Committee, the Runaway and Homeless Providers Coalition in Monroe County, and the Single Point of Access for mental health and other services in Livingston County.

LASROC is a member of the 360 Collaborative Network, an online referral system. LASROC is involved in the Systems Integration Project in Monroe County that seeks to create an online client portal/referral system to easily connect those in need of services to service providers and is a member of the Justice for All Strategic leadership committees.

Of note in the 2021-22 contract year is the addition of JustCause as a subgrantee. Though it is an independent agency, JustCause proudly serves as the pro bono “arm” of the other civil legal services providers in the Rochester community. The legal service providers meet on a regular basis to facilitate service delivery and coordinate services so as to avoid duplication. Of significance during the last fiscal year was the Tenant Defense Project, a collaboration between JustCause, LAWNY, Empire Justice Center, and the Legal Aid Society of Rochester. Developed in partnership with a diverse group of community stakeholders as part of the NYS Court’s Justice for All initiative, the Project integrates legal services with current and future homelessness prevention programs offered by local, state, and federal agencies. JustCause’s attorneys and paralegals staff the Tenant Defense Hotline, process eviction-related cases, and work in close partnership with LASROC, LawNY, and the Rochester Black Bar Association (RBBA) to cover eviction matters in Rochester City Court and Monroe County Court. This contract period, JustCause reported to LASROC 603 direct legal representation cases and community legal education to 1,402 individuals.
Sources of Funding

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>IOLA Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>City and County Funding</td>
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<td>State Funding</td>
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<td>Federal Funding</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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