Overview of Achievements

In 2022, LIFT officially changed our name to Family Legal Care. This name better captures the breadth of our services and the compassion that is central to our work.

Family Legal Care provided nearly 25,000 families with legal information and advice during the reporting period of April 2021 to March 2022. Our staff continued to work remotely and provide unrepresented litigants with the legal advice and information they need to self-advocate in Family Court. At the time of this report, the Family Courts are operating in a mostly virtual capacity, and families are experiencing long delays as the Court works through the significant backlog of cases that accumulated at the beginning of the pandemic. Highlights of the past year include:

- Family Law Information Helplines: 20,160 people received legal information through our Phone, Email, and Live-Chat Helplines. The Helplines continue to be the main entry point to our services for litigants.
- Legal Consultations: We completed 3,014 one-one-one consultations to provide legal advice and assistance completing Court documents. 1,773 of these consultations were with new clients; the remaining 1,241 were follow-up consultations.
- Family Legal Care’s Pro Bono Program: Our pro bono program completed 379 consultations, 359 of which were completed by volunteer attorneys. We engaged 5 new community service partners and 4 new pro bono partners.
- Legal Resource Guides (LRGs): 8,424 LRGs were distributed from courthouses or community partners, and 133,978 people accessed our digital LRGs on our website.
- Family Law Education and Community Outreach: 201 participants attended webinars and virtual events. Pre-recorded legal education videos were viewed 3,120 times.

Population Served: Low Income Populations

Area Served: New York City Metropolitan Area

Total IOLA Grant: $135,000

Staffing Full Time Equivalents:
- Total Staff: 21.8
- Lawyers: 11.6
- Other: 10.2
Direct Legal Services: Cases

Family Law:
Valencia is an undocumented immigrant, and the parent of a young disabled child. Her child’s father was abusive, and threatened to report her to ICE. There was a pending criminal case against the father and Valencia had orders of protection for herself and the child. She came to Family Legal Care for help with a custody petition; she was distraught and confused. One of our Bilingual Staff Attorneys advised Valencia on her potential case for custody, and made sure she knew her rights, how the prospective case in Family Court would proceed, and how it was different from the case in criminal court. She was also referred to a domestic violence organization that Family Legal Care partners with so she could receive additional support. At the end of her consultation, she was calmer, said she felt clarity on what to do next and what to expect in Family Court, and expressed her gratitude for our help. Family Legal Care was able to ease the uncertainty around Family Court for Valencia, and help her as she takes the next steps to a safer and more peaceful life with her son.

Family Law:
Family Legal Care's Pro Bono Program recently helped a woman from Dutchess County, Leanne, win custody and child support for her two young children. Their father, Tim, is active in the military, and the two separated for good after many years on and off. Leanne planned to file for divorce, but in the meantime needed help filing petitions for custody and child support, as Tim was refusing to help pay for the children’s expenses. She called our Helpline and was scheduled for a consult with a pro bono attorney. A lawyer from Bloomberg met with Leanne and helped her prepare the petitions, and helped her strategize how to respond to Tim’s arguments around the amount of child support. It took nearly a year for the case to go through the Courts, but Leanne eventually won custody, will receive child support, and has the right to move anywhere so long as Tim is notified. She was very grateful to Family Legal Care and her pro bono attorney for supporting her through a stressful time.
Other Services: Overview

Legal Resource Guides (LRGs): Family Legal Care’s original, multilingual LRGs—more than 40 in all—are unique publications, available at all programs and on our website. This year, nearly 134,000 visitors to our website accessed the digital LRGs. The guides cover a wide range of family law issues, including procedural topics such as how to begin a case, and detailed information on a litigant’s rights and possible remedies in an array of case types. The LRGs are written in an easy-to-understand Q&A format. They are often a litigant’s first exposure to the subject matter, and quickly become crucial to the litigant’s ability to proceed successfully without representation. The LRGs are translated from English into eight languages: Chinese, French, Haitian/Creole, Hebrew, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Yiddish.

We respond to requests from the Family Court administration, the New York City Council, and other key stakeholders to develop new LRGs for specific topics and populations. For example, we have developed LRGs targeted to active military service members, military veterans, and previously incarcerated parents. We are currently reviewing our LRGs with an eye toward optimizing the layout to increase readability. Our Digital LRGs will be prominently featured on our newly redesigned website, which is scheduled to launch in the summer of 2022.

Family Law Navigator: In late July 2021, we launched Family Law Navigator, a powerful new tool on our website that delivers accurate family law information customized to each person’s legal case and situation. In just 2-3 minutes, Family Law Navigator provides legal information that can be a helpful starting point for people who are beginning to address their family law issue. Users can also use Family Law Navigator to request a consultation from a pro bono attorney through our Pro Bono Program. In the 7 months since its creation, it has been used over 1,000 times. In the coming year, we look to make this tool even more effective by increasing the number of topics covered, creating videos to provide helpful context in easy-to-understand language, and making the customized information reports available in Spanish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of People who Benefitted from Services Other Than Direct Legal Representation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Legal Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Se Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Assistance</td>
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Other Services: Technology and Other Innovations

As mentioned above, this year Family Legal Care developed the Digital Justice Initiative to address the gaps in the Family Court’s online resources and increase access to justice for families who do not have access to computers or a reliable internet connection. Our Family Law Navigator app, available on mobile devices, gives parents and caregivers a helpful starting point to begin addressing their family law issue. Since its creation, it has been used over 1,000 times. In the coming year, we look to build on this tool to make it even more effective, increasing the number of topics it covers and translating it into Spanish. We will also create short animated videos with easy-to-understand language to help people who learn best by video.

Another important piece of the Digital Justice Initiative will be guided Court forms, where users answer easy-to-understand questions in plain language, and their answers are mapped onto the fields of the form, generating a completed form in the PDF format accepted by the Court’s Electronic Document Delivery System portal. These forms will be able to be filled out by a mobile device, so litigants without expensive software or computer equipment can easily complete documents required for their court case. The Affidavit of Service guided form is live on our website at https://liftonline.app.law/affidavit-of-service-2.

Other Services: Trainings

Family Legal Care prides itself on our workplace culture that prioritizes professional development for all employees. A portion of the operating budget is dedicated to professional development. When an employee attends a training or CLE, they are encouraged to share what they have learned with their colleagues to foster a culture of shared knowledge. In the past year, all Family Legal Care employees have completed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training. We have also held the following trainings for Programs staff over the past year: De-escalation training, Forensic Evaluation Training, CPSA training, NYLAG Guardianship family court training.

Family Legal Care’s Staff Attorneys take regular CLE trainings as required by the New York CLE Board, and many attend additional trainings and webinars, legislative briefings, and workshops. Recent trainings attended by staff attorneys include: Effective Mediation Advocacy: Skills and Strategies for Litigators; Professional Responsibility in the Wake of a Pandemic; Views from the Bench: Unconscious Bias in Matrimonial and Family Law; and The Name Change Process After the Gender Recognition Act.

This year, Family Legal Care’s Legal Director and Director of Legal Technology are co-teaching a clinic with students at New York Law School. Under the supervision of Staff Attorneys, students assist with client intakes, conduct client interviews, and draft petitions and other documents. In Spring 2022 Family Legal Care also hosted our first Pro Bono Scholar, a third-year law student from Cardozo Law School. She has been assisting in the Pro Bono Program, updating our LRGs, and our internal training manual.
Pro Bono Volunteer Involvement

Family Legal Care’s Director of Pro Bono Programs and Staff Attorney for Pro Bono & Outreach have established partnerships with more than a dozen major law firms and corporate legal departments in NYC. We provide detailed training to volunteer attorneys in family law, the procedures of the Family Court, and the utilization of our pro bono consultation platform. Family Legal Care is now certified as a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) provider, so that Pro Bono Program training provides CLE credits to lawyers who complete it. Each pro bono partner commits to completing a number of consultations per month, and we connect them to a client who needs help on their family court case. We receive client referrals from our network of community-based nonprofit service providers, as well as callers who reach out to our Family Law Helplines or use the Family Law Navigator tool on our website. Our Program Associates on the Helplines assist with pro bono client intakes to ensure we obtain client and case information efficiently. Our Pro Bono Program Coordinator assists with scheduling each client’s pro bono appointment, providing instruction and technical support on using the platform, and organizing legal documents to make the best use of time during their consultation. We also provide digital Legal Resource Guides (LRGs) to augment the legal advice clients receive. If a follow-up consultation is needed as the case progresses, we prioritize pairing the client with the same attorney so there is continuity on the case.

Significant achievements include the creation of referral partnerships with 4 new service providers, including: Legal Hand Call-In Center serving Nassau and Suffolk Counties; Legal Hand Call-In Center serving Schenectady and Albany Counties; Center for Elder Law & Justice, and Community Legal Help Project.

We also engaged four new law firms and corporate legal departments to provide volunteer legal services, including: Davis Polk, Fried Frank, Milbank, and Travelers.

**101 Attorneys volunteered 473 hours**

**4 Law Students volunteered 884 hours**

**14 Other Volunteers volunteered 553 hours**
**Significant Collaborations**

Family Legal Care has a close relationship with the Family Court, and we conduct mutual referrals with our partners in the legal services community, including the City Bar Justice Center, Advocates for Children, Housing Court Answers, and Her Justice. We refer clients who need support on domestic violence matters to Safe Horizon and local Family Justice Centers. We have relationships with organizations who provide a wide range of other services, including settlement houses, job training providers, mental and physical health clinics, substance use treatment centers, and re-entry service providers for people returning from incarceration.

As mentioned above, our Community Outreach program partners with established wrap-around service providers to present legal education workshops and clinics to their c

We also partner with the following law firms and corporate legal departments through our Pro Bono Program: Davis Polk; Fried Frank; Milbank; Proskauer Rose; Sullivan & Cromwell; Alston & Bird; Skadden; Stroock & Stroock & Lavan; Shearman & Sterling; Travelers; Bloomberg; The Bank of New York Mellon; The Goodstein Firm; Verizon; AlG; and JPMorgan. Our FLC service partners include: Legal Hand Call-In Centers serving Nassau and Suffolk Counties and Schenectady and Albany Counties, respectively; The COVID-19 Child Support Task Force; The Legal Project of the Capital District Women's Bar Association; Nassau Suffolk Law Services; Legal Assistance of Western New York (LawNY); the Rural Law Center; and the Long Island Advocacy Center; Center for Elder Law & Justice; and Community Legal Help Project. These partnerships enable us to expand the footprint of our services throughout New York State.

**Sources of Funding**

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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