

**End poverty.
Advocate for justice.**

ghla
Greater Hartford Legal Aid

**End poverty.
Invest in justice.**

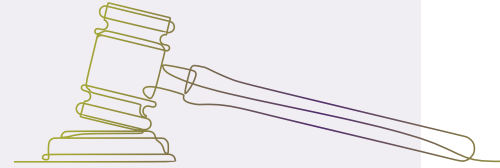
ghlaf
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Legal Aid Foundation

2024 ANNUAL & CAMPAIGN REPORT

GHLA Mission & Impact

We advocate for equity and social justice, addressing the effects and root causes of poverty. Our clients strive to overcome violence, trauma, and lack of housing and resources.

Our Mission of Justice drives us to connect with clients and the community to increase equity and opportunity. Sometimes law is the only thing that makes a difference.



The impact of our advocacy and collaboration with community partners is poverty alleviation—both person-by-person and by addressing systemic barriers to safety, opportunity, and greater well-being.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

3,142

LEGAL MATTERS WERE HANDLED, INCLUDING 1,926 NEW CASES

8,300+

PEOPLE HELPED THROUGH LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADVICE

1,000s

MORE PEOPLE HELPED THROUGH SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY



How We Help Our Clients

“My lawyer was very professional and compassionate. Her words and wisdom helped strengthen me to fight through the difficult separation and divorce from a very scary and dangerous person.”

CLIENT EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Received court orders and legal remedies to stabilize her life and family

“It calmed my nerves and helped me out a great deal. I was able to sleep in peace knowing I had the lawyer’s help. I believe because I had legal help, it also let the opposing party know that I wasn’t battling this alone.”

CLIENT FACING EVICTION

Received the legal advocacy needed to defend an unwarranted eviction

“My lawyer explained the whole pardon process. I can finally move on with my life and future career goals without any barriers.”

CLIENT WHO RECEIVED A PARDON

Removed challenges to continuing his growth and rehabilitation since his conviction

“GH LA helped me get the special education services my son needed.”

CLIENT WHO NEEDED REPRESENTATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Received individualized programming mandated by federal law for physical and emotional disabilities impeding learning

“My lawyer made my life a lot better. Not being able to work or help my family out because of my disability made me feel less of a person. But you helped.”

CLIENT WITH DISABILITIES

Won eligibility for Supplemental Security Income monthly benefits

Legal representation improves safety, reduces homelessness, and increases opportunity.



Individual Advocacy to Meet Basic Human Needs

DEFENDED TENANTS AT RISK OF BEING EVICTED

GHLA leads the Statewide Eviction Right to Counsel Program in Greater Hartford, providing individual representation to hundreds of individuals facing the traumatic disruption and long-term collateral consequences of eviction. Through this extensive representation, GHLA also identified and addressed systemic barriers to housing stability, habitability, and fair court processes.

IMPROVED HOUSING CONDITIONS IN HARTFORD

GHLA represented over 100 individual tenants in housing conditions legal claims, enforcing their rights to safe, livable homes. We worked to improve the systems to enforce individual complaints, and ensured that tenants can receive hearings before a judge at their first court appearance if appropriate, such as when conditions are dangerous or unlivable or a landlord is nonresponsive. We also worked with City of Hartford Mayor Arulampalam and Housing Code Enforcement to inform tenants about their rights to habitable rental housing and the systems to enforce these rights.

PROTECTED VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In our dedicated court office space, GHLA provided lawyers to help restraining order applicants in Hartford's Family Court, with the State's busiest restraining order docket. Applicants face complex legal, family and safety issues that require a domestic violence-knowledgeable attorney to analyze and provide legal services. A restraining order is a highly effective safety strategy for some victims.

PROCURED STABLE INCOME FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WHO CANNOT WORK

GHLA procured Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for dozens of people with disabilities who cannot work, but whose disabilities are challenging to prove to the Social Security Administration. After multiple denials by the SSA and extensive development of the records, our advocacy achieves grants of monthly benefits—giving clients the security and stability necessary to manage their health conditions and support themselves and their families.

GHLA is the
legal aid
organization in
Greater Hartford
providing the
full range of
substantive
advocacy for
priority legal
needs of
low-income
people through
their life span.



Systemic Advocacy to Strengthen Community and Improve Access to Justice

VINDICATED TENANTS' FEDERAL RIGHTS TO DUE PROCESS AND ACCURATE RENT CALCULATIONS IN LARGE HOUSING AUTHORITY

GHLA and pro bono partner Day Pitney achieved an interim stipulation on behalf of a proposed class of low-income public housing tenants, reforming the housing authority's rent calculation methods and procuring due process rights prior to eviction. The agreement means that only funds that are truly income under federal regulations will be counted in calculating rent, and that tenants will have access to grievance procedures before being evicted.

IMPLEMENTED CITY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We know that to comprehensively address the eviction crisis in Connecticut, providing lawyers in eviction cases is not enough. Renters pay significantly higher rents in Connecticut compared to pre-pandemic, which disproportionately impacts renters with low incomes. Strategies in addition to representation in court are necessary. The City of Hartford granted GHLA \$1 million for rental assistance for Hartford tenants represented by GHLA in evictions or housing conditions cases. These funds have assisted over 200 families in 2024 in retaining their housing or securing an adequate alternative. The funds, administered pro bono by Shipman & Goodwin, also allow GHLA to gauge the effects of the "lawyer + money" intervention on the crisis of high eviction rates.

PURSUED FAIRNESS IN STATE'S COURT SYSTEM THROUGH ADVOCACY TO REQUIRE MINIMUM MANDATORY DISCLOSURE IN HOUSING CASES

GHLA worked to increase fairness in the justice system, including for people who must participate in the system without a lawyer by their side. GHLA has advocated small, common-sense steps—such as requiring landlords to provide leases and rent ledgers prior to mediation in housing court—to help bridge the knowledge and power gap between people represented by a lawyer and those forced to defend themselves in a complex court process without one. GHLA will continue to press for policy measures that ensure basic due process and fairness in the court system.



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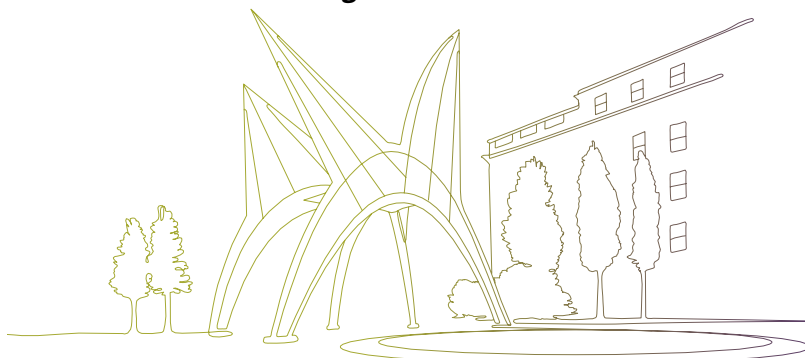
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The GHLA Foundation community is you, our donors. Your generous support means we can provide life-changing and life-saving advocacy to more people. We honor our vital partnership with lawyers, law firms and corporations who support access to justice. Over the period of January – December 2024, the Foundation raised a near-record total of \$497,377. Special thanks to Raytheon Technologies Corporation and its attorneys for their extraordinary commitment—\$118,000 raised with 100% of RTX’s Connecticut-based attorneys making gifts. Also, we highlight and thank Robinson & Cole for its outstanding gift of \$44,000, and Shipman & Goodwin for its generous contribution of \$30,000. Finally, sincere thanks to our Board members for your work throughout the Campaign season to secure law firms’ and corporate donations, and for your personal financial contributions.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

U.S. Attorney Vanessa Avery

U.S. Attorney Avery shared her long experience and commitment to upholding the law, engaging the community, and improving our systems of justice.

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