

KANSAS LEGAL SERVICES, INC.



• • 2009 ANNUAL REPORT • •

KANSAS LEGAL SERVICES
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TOPEKA, KS 66603

www.kansaslegalservices.org

MARILYN HARP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1-800-723-6953

MESSAGE FROM MARILYN HARP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Over 27,000 clients were served by KLS in 2009. Even at that rate, we didn't come close to meeting the need or accepting every eligible client who applies for service.

I continually remind clients that their right to counsel does not apply to civil cases. The U.S. Constitution guarantees criminal defendants an attorney in most felony matters. You can't be put in jail without having the right to talk to an attorney. However, you can be removed from your house, lose wages from garnishment or lose custody of your children without any legal counsel. What the Constitution doesn't require, Kansas Legal Services attempts to provide. However, we can't meet the demand for all the services needed or requested of our staff.

With that in mind, I approach every year in an effort to try to expand the legal resources available to low income Kansans. In 2009, we were successful in expanding services through new Medical-Legal Partnerships. In addition, our support of efforts of the Supreme Court Committee on Self Represented Litigants has increased the number of legal forms and instructions available in Kansas.

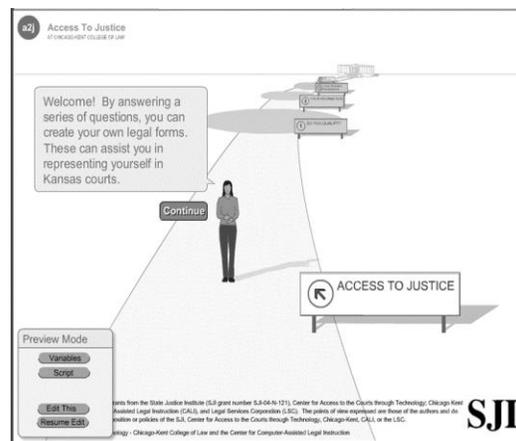
One of the medical-legal partnerships was the Southeast Kansas Medical Legal Partnership — formed with the Southeast Kansas Community Health Center in May, 2009. Staff works out of the health clinic and accepts referrals of patients identified by medical providers. They assisted a great grandparent in obtaining legal guardianship so she could consent to health care for her three grandsons. Staff reduced stress for a chronically ill patient by resolving issues related to the foreclosure of her home. A variety of patients with many legal problems were served by this new clinic, each targeted at improving social determinants of health. With the help of the Sunflower Foundation, we are working to expand this service delivery concept to other parts of Kansas. In each program we work to

create a plan to sustain the program when currently available funding ends.

Kansas Legal Services has been involved with Court efforts to provide basic forms for self represented litigants. Court Clerks cannot provide legal advice to the many people who come to the courthouse seeking help. The Office of Judicial Administration and Kansas Legal Services created the Access to Justice Adviceline to meet a portion of that need. Still, people come to every Courthouse seeking forms, primarily to file simple divorces. In 2009, the Judicial Council created and the Supreme Court approved a set of forms for obtaining a divorce in Kansas. KLS added an interactive computerized interview to obtain the information required to complete these forms. By answering a series of questions online, the self represented litigant can complete the appropriate Kansas forms. These forms are now available on the Kansas Legal Services website, <http://www.kansaslegalservices.org/Home/PublicWeb/FreeLegalForms>. We use an A2J program, developed nationally with Legal Services Corporation, to create an avenue to provide information to self represented litigants. This service will greatly expand the number of low income persons that KLS can assist, while significantly easing a burden on Court clerks.

We can't be all things to all people. We can work every year to reduce the impacts of poverty on our clients' lives. We can strive to provide more equal access to the justice system for low income Kansans.

Marilyn Harp, Executive Director



MESSAGE FROM CHARLENE BRUBAKER, BOARD PRESIDENT

On July 24, 2009, KLS was pleased to host the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation. Kansas Legal Services has, for 35 years, been the Kansas grantee of this important provider of civil legal services to the poor. During the visit, the Board held its quarterly meeting. KLS had the opportunity to share information with the Board on several programs operated by KLS. Highlighted were our new medical-legal partnerships, our document assembly *pro bono* events and our Employment Training division. While an adjunct to the basic legal services provided by KLS, these programs are what makes KLS unique among other service providers.

At the Brown v Board of Education National Historic site, KLS Board of Directors and the Kansas Bar Foundation hosted the board at a welcome reception. Chief of the Kansas Supreme Court, Justice Robert Davis was the keynote speaker at the reception. His message of support for KLS and all who do work on behalf of America's poor included these words:

"Your achievements over the years have deepened our nation's pillars of justice and lifted the hopes and hearts of those whose voice might not otherwise be heard in our legal system. ... **YOU** are the professionals who do not look away, who do not forget that those being served are human beings with faces and names, with life stories and life needs. **YOU** meet these people every day with a promise that they will have access to justice."

This occasion marked the 35th Anniversary of the signing of the Legal Services Corporation Act, authorizing LSC to receive and distribute federal money. Ramona Shump, a Topeka resident and early LSC national client board member, was on hand to cut a celebratory cake.



The Legal Services Corporation Board President, Frank Strickland, and LSC President, Helaine Barnett, presented certificates of appreciation to several attorneys who provide pro bono services to KLS clients. These honorees accepted on behalf of the many Kansas lawyers who donate time and talent toward the goal of equal access to the justice system.



Left to Right: LSC Board Chairman Frank B. Strickland, Lynette Petty, Shaye Downing, Kathleen Coode, Kansas Elder law AdviceLine volunteers Robin Maxon and Mike Culver, LSC President Helaine M. Barnett, Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert E. Davis.

During the LSC reception, we were reminded of the words of Robert Kennedy, with which I will close, “Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, that person sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.” The ripples of hope sent by KLS during 2009 are too numerous to count. We are happy to have this great organization as an important part of the Kansas legal community.

Charlene Brubaker
President, KLS Board of Directors

Special thanks to LSC Reception sponsors:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Kansas Bar Foundation | Judge Jean F. Shepherd |
| John and Peggy Cobb | Judge Deanell R. Tacha |
| John J. Jurcyk, Jr. | Margaret A. Farley |
| Michael R. Wallace | Terri Pemberton |
| Clark, Mize & Linville, Chartered | Karen Barry West |
| Alan Johnson | Michael D. Gragert |
| George Catt | Michael T. Wilson |
| Henson, Hutton, Mudrick & Gragson | |

OVERVIEW – KANSAS LEGAL SERVICES

PROGRAM HISTORY

During the 1920s, the American Bar Association acknowledged the need for special assistance to the poor by creating a committee on legal aid. Early legal services supporters recognized that the pledge of “equal justice under the law” cannot be realized as long as people with limited resources do not have access to the justice system. Legal aid societies were formed in Topeka, Wichita and Kansas City by lawyers and community members concerned about the poor. From the 1960s until 1974, the three Kansas legal aid societies, with the support of local bar associations, operated under the authority of the Office of Economic Opportunity Office of Legal Services. The courts became a key battleground in the War on Poverty and Legal Services lawyers were the advocates and defenders of the poor throughout America. Along with Head Start and the Community Action Program, Legal Services is one of the enduring programs from that era.

Authority for the legal services program was transferred from the Community Services Administration (successor to the Office of Economic Opportunity) to the newly formed Legal Services Corporation during 1975. Through all of these changes in administrative authority and funding, the Kansas legal aid societies continued to provide free legal services to the poor in Kansas.

In 1977, the Kansas City, Topeka and Wichita legal aid societies merged to form Kansas Legal Services, Inc. Kansas was the second state in the nation to become a single, statewide entity. Building on this strength, Kansas Legal Services now has thirteen legal services field offices and two mediation offices located across the state, and maintains an extensive retainer contract system with cooperating members of the Kansas Bar Association.

GOALS

Kansas Legal Services has progressively focused its efforts on special needs individuals, such as victims of domestic violence, the homeless, children in foster care, the elderly, farmers, those with disabling conditions, individuals seeking access to health care, those seeking mediation services and persons who need basic life skills and employment training

One mission of Kansas Legal Services is to provide equal access to justice for persons not able to pay for legal and other essential services. Kansas Legal Services is also a vehicle for keeping many low income people from falling permanently into the category of chronically poor. It serves as a conduit by which many low income people successfully get back on their feet and become self-sustaining.

CIVIL LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Civil legal assistance is advice and representation in cases that are not punishable by imprisonment. They involve suits over money, property and other individual rights. Such cases might include consumer, finance, education, employment, family, health, housing, juvenile issues, income assistance, Indian/Tribal law and individual rights.

HOW DO KANSANS QUALIFY?

- Must have a problem that has a legal remedy
- Must have a legal problem that can be resolved through the Kansas courts
- Must be eligible for free or reduced fee legal assistance (call for details)
- Must call **1-800-723-6953** to apply

TYPES OF CASES KLS DOES NOT HANDLE:

- Criminal cases*
- Traffic cases*
- Accident claims
- Personal injury or wrongful death suits
- Representation of prisoners

* Criminal and traffic cases may be handled by court appointment or government contract.

WHAT ABOUT VICTIMS OF CRIME?

The Victims' Rights Program of the Kansas Attorney General's Office (1-800-828-9745) has many helpful resources.

Victims of sexual or domestic violence can call 1-800-799-7233 or visit the website of the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (www.kcsdv.org).

Those with needs outside KLS services (criminal and traffic) may want to ask the District Court to appoint an attorney.



WHAT IF SOMEONE DOESN'T QUALIFY FOR KLS SERVICES?

Individuals who wish to have an attorney may call the Kansas Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service (1-800-928-3111). Staff of the Lawyer Referral Service will provide names and contact information of area attorneys who can be hired for representation.

LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WITH THE PRIVATE BAR

Kansas Legal Services, Inc. continues to operate cooperative programs with the Kansas Bar Association (KBA) and local bar associations in the state. Current programs for increasing and improving the availability of legal services to low income Kansans include:

- **Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Program** allows KLS to address four areas of need. IOLTA funds were used during 2009 to provide advice and representation in housing, consumer issues, domestic violence and as matching funds for the Kansas Human Rights Commission Voluntary Mediation Project.
- The **Reduced Fee Plan** provides legal services to people living on lower incomes who might not otherwise be able to hire lawyers or qualify for free services. The program was designed by the KBA and assists clients with routine legal matters at reduced fees.
- **Pro bono** panels have been organized in cooperation with many city and county bar organizations throughout the state to extend free services to low income Kansans who may not qualify for services through KLS.
- The **Lawyer Referral Service** is administered by KLS for the KBA and is operated from our Central Intake. Lawyer Referral matches individuals throughout the state with participating KBA attorneys in their area.
- **Private Bar Retainer Contracts** are used by KLS to supplement staff service statewide. Private Bar Contracts are essential to expanding service availability and controlling costs, especially in sparsely populated rural counties.

The **Elder Law Hotline** operates through a partnership of KLS staff and private attorney volunteers. With a single phone call, Kansas seniors can receive legal information and advice.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Administered by the Office of Judicial Administration and overseen by the Supreme Court of Kansas, the Access to Justice Fund is designed to improve access to legal assistance for low income Kansans who need advice, representation or mediation services. The program is also intended to assist the Kansas courts in providing service to *pro se* litigants. KLS was awarded Access to Justice funds for the first time in 1996. Access to Justice funding has made it possible to create a statewide Access to Justice Advice Line and to greatly expand the ability of Kansas Legal Services to provide advice and representation in family law matters, the area of need that is historically the most underserved. The Access to Justice program allows Kansas court personnel to directly refer low income individuals to KLS offices statewide.

FAMILY LAW

Through Access to Justice, Legal Services Corporation, United Way, Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA), Victims of Crime Act, Department of Justice and other funding, KLS represents thousands of low income persons—primarily women and children—each year in domestic law matters. The demand for legal assistance in

family law matters continues to far exceed the capacity of KLS to provide direct representation. Priority is placed on cases of spousal or child abuse and protection from abuse orders.

Access to Justice Funding (ATJ) has increased the number of family law clients KLS has been able to serve. Due in large part to ATJ funding, KLS is assisting more low income Kansans with domestic law matters than ever before in its 33-year history.

The **Guardian Ad Litem Support Center (GALSC)** is a statewide program that provides training, advice and other supportive services to guardians *ad litem*, those who represent children in court proceedings. KLS GALSC staff attorneys also provide direct advice and representation in child welfare cases.

Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program funds from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs continued in 2009. The statewide grant supports legal services for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or sexual assault.

Victims of Crime Act Grants (VOCA) are administered by the Governor of Kansas to assist victims of domestic violence. KLS offices in Emporia, Hays, Hutchinson, Kansas City, Pittsburg, Salina, and Topeka were awarded VOCA funds in 2009 to provide legal advice, representation and referrals to families fleeing abuse.

The **Foster Care Helpline**, part of the GALSC, is a toll-free hotline that provided accurate and timely information to more than 483 foster children, foster parents and other concerned individuals who called with questions about the foster care system in 2009.

PUBLIC BENEFITS AND DISABILITY LAW

The primary goal of KLS' public benefits advocacy is to assist low income individuals in accessing state and federal public benefits programs. By maximizing this access, KLS staff work to ensure that low income Kansans have necessary income, health care, food and shelter.

The **Disability Law Project** is funded through a contract with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). The Adult Social Security Advocacy Project is designed to assist adults receiving General Assistance or Temporary Assistance to Families. KLS provides legal advice and representation to individuals receiving cash assistance to assist them in becoming eligible for federal Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The **Children's Social Security Advocacy Project** seeks to obtain SSI for disabled children. The project is focused on children who are receiving services from SRS. Obtaining SSI cash and medical benefits for children often makes home placement possible.

ELDER LAW

KLS cooperates with the Kansas Department on Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging as an integral part of the state aging network. Older Americans Act funds are combined with Legal Services Corporation and other private funds to address this growing area of need.

Senior Citizen Law Project (SCLP) provides services in a wide range of civil legal issues to persons age 60 and older. Its objective is to target the more vulnerable elderly population who are in the greatest social and economic need. Priorities include assuring that seniors obtain the cash and medical assistance essential to their well-being and stopping financial, physical or psychological abuse of elders. SCLP also has an extensive community education program through which elders and workers serving them are educated about elders' rights and protections under the law.

One point of access is the Elder Law Hotline, a program that links KLS staff and private attorneys to provide the broadest range possible of legal advice and information.

KLS has a program in Topeka (Jayhawk Support Services for Elders) that provides persons age 60 and older with financial management services provided by volunteers. This service makes it possible for many seniors to stay in their own homes.

F A R M L A W

The **Farm Mediation Legal Counseling Program** is operated through a contract with Kansas State University. KLS provides legal assistance to Kansas farmers and ranchers through referrals from the Kansas Agricultural Mediation Service (KAMS). KLS farm specialist attorneys provide both advice and legal representation to KAMS clients in every county of the state. When legal assistance helps farmers retain their farms, the economies of local communities and the state benefit.

M E D I C A L - L E G A L P A R T N E R S H I P S

In January, 2008, Kansas Legal Services implemented the Family Health Care Legal Services Clinic in partnership with the University of Kansas Law School and the Southwest Boulevard Family Health Clinic in Kansas City, Kansas. The clinic serves patients living in some of the poorest areas of the community. The goal of the partnership is to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable individuals, children and families by integrating legal assistance into the medical setting.



In 2009, Kansas Legal Services implemented two more Medical - Legal Clinics. With funding from the Sunflower Foundation and in partnership with the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas, the Southeast Kansas Medical-Legal Partnership began on June 1, 2009, in Pittsburg. In August, 2009, the Kansas-Focused Medical-Legal Clinic for Children was implemented in partnership with Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas, funded by the greater Kansas City Health Care Foundation. At both sites, KLS staff provide legal assistance to persons using the health centers' services who are referred by a medical staff member.

M I G R A N T L A W

The **Migrant Project** allows KLS to work with a variety of organizations on a Legal Services Corporation Migrant Project to improve outreach efforts to the migrant community. KLS provides wage claim, public benefits, education, work contract and domestic violence assistance to this community.

PRO BONO VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION 2009

2009 Kansas Bar Association *Pro Bono* Award

Elder Law Hotline



Ruth Brackney	Peter Orsi	Ina Kay Zimmerman	Kathy Kirk
Jim Forsyth	Molly M. Wood	Chasity M. Helm	Tina Vega
William Taylor	Michael Clutter	Michael Lawless	Joyce Haile Selassie
Karen Weber	Randall Henry	Steve Johnson	Michael Day
Keith Martin	A. James Gillmore	Constance Achterberg	Robin Maxon
Dennis Shay	David Hughes	Nathan Sutton	Brandy Sutton
Terry Arthur	William J. Pauzaskie	David Adams	Krystal Woodbury
John Palenz	Calvin Rider	Granville Scott Bush	Gary Jones
Michael Dwyer	David E. Roberts	John Mitchelson	Michael Montoya
Dan Lykins	Scott C. Stockwell	John Shaffer	Sanford Nathan
Ray Connell	Sterling Waggener	Robert Collins	Shon Robben
Joan Hawkins	Herbert K. Dodd	Cindy Patton	Charles Kugler
Brock McPherson	Rick E. Hodge	John W Jordan	Grant Bannister
James Wright	Stacey Janssen	Richard L Honeyman	Evelyn Allen
Gabrielle M. Thompson	Glenn R. Braun	Frank Taff	Thomas Harris
Robert German	K. Kirk Nystrom	Steve Dickerson	David Newbery
Roger Wilson	Louis Podrebarac	Wayne Westblade	Timothy Knopp

2009 Kansas Bar Association *Pro Bono*
Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to:

- ❖ Lynda Allene Cleveland
- ❖ Karl G. Johnson
- ❖ Professor Lynette F. Petty
- ❖ Kari S. Schmidt
- ❖ Shea E. Stevens
- ❖ James T. Ward
- ❖ Paula D. Langworthy

53 New *Pro Bono* Attorneys in 2009



19 Document Assembly Clinics were held across Kansas in 2009, involving staff and 28 volunteer attorneys in preparing Transfer on Death Deeds, Living Wills, Powers of Attorney and other vital documents for low income persons.

KLS, Kansas Association for Justice and Habitat for Humanity Join Forces to Help Habitat Homeowners

In the high demand environment of Kansas Legal Services, much attention is focused on solving problems of an emergency nature. The domestic abuse victim needs a Protection from Abuse order NOW! The senior, who has had their Social Security bank account attached for an unpaid debt, needs attention NOW! The tenant with the Sheriff at their door holding eviction papers can't wait until tomorrow to get the advice they need. They need to talk with an attorney NOW!

It is therefore refreshing when Kansas Legal Services staff can focus on the future legal needs of low income Kansans with a preventive approach. With the help of volunteer private attorneys, KLS held a number of Document Preparation clinics in 2009. These clinics offer low income persons the opportunity to prepare for the future. After discussing their needs with an attorney, they can sign a Power of Attorney for Health Care, Living Wills or Transfer on Death Deeds. Each of these documents could prevent a future problem and allows them to see that their wishes will be honored if they become disabled or die.

Kansas Association for Justice (KsAJ) members recently assisted in an event in Kansas City. KLS teamed with Heartland Habitat for Humanity to assist 15 Habitat Homeowners. Working in two hour shifts, the volunteer attorneys met with the clients and educated them about the options available through advance directives. Forms were prepared to meet the clients' specific needs. Notary and translation services were available so that the families left with signed documents that met their individual needs.

“As homeowners, these low income families need to think about the future and how their home will be passed on after their death. Habitat works with families at 30 – 60 percent of the area median income. These aren't folks who have regular relationships with attorneys,” said Marilyn Harp, Executive Director of Kansas Legal Services. “I love it when attorneys get involved with Habitat – but they have skills beyond swinging a hammer. Let other volunteers do the construction work. Attorneys should use their special skills to help Habitat homeowners with their legal needs.”

KsAJ notifies its members when similar volunteer events are held in their community. Attorneys receive needed training and support to successfully help at these events.



Many people do not realize the importance of our Central Intake Application Department. Before any applicant can receive advice or representation, they must first contact Central Intake and discuss their legal need with an Intake Specialist. That is exactly what these staff members are.... “special”-ists. It takes a special person to be able to work in Central Intake.

Without Central Intake and the dedicated people who work there, applicants would not have a “beginning” to their legal needs and resolution. Central Intake is the first representative of Kansas Legal Services and, as we all know, first impressions are very important. What a wonderful first impression for a victim of domestic violence to have an understanding and empathetic person on the other end of the line. Someone to give that victim hope of a better and safer future. Calls come from so many different needs and each applicant is offered kindness and understanding. Staff are well-trained but, more importantly, inside each Intake Specialist lies compassion, devotion and a really big heart. Some may have had similar circumstances which give them even more understanding and enlightenment and others instinctively know we live in a less than perfect world full of heartache and impoverishment.

Michele Hawley, Central Intake Manager, recently wrote: Our Central Intake unit fields calls from several sources: Kansas Elder Law Hotline, Access To Justice Advice Line, Kansas Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service and requests for help through Kansas Legal Services field offices. The call center is an extremely stressful place to work with an average of about 4,800 calls being processed every month. We hold weekly meetings in an effort to keep staff motivated and informed within this very busy, fast-paced environment. Speakers from other community resources are utilized as one piece of this. Advocates from Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center, representatives from Low Income Tax-Payer Clinic and case workers from Kansas Children’s Service League are just a few who’ve spoken recently. With this and other attempts to support employees, the job of Intake Specialist is still very difficult. There are days when it feels like caller after caller is releasing frustrations on you, and the feeling of being powerless to help is almost overwhelming. Even in the face of this, Intake Specialists remain calm and adhere to our “no hang-up” policy. The Intake Specialists, who choose to stay in this job, are some of the strongest and most compassionate people you would ever meet!



Staff are well-trained but more importantly, inside each Intake Specialist lies compassion, devotion and a really big heart.

As you read the stories of our clients, please take a moment to remember they did not become clients until they picked up the phone and spoke to a Central Intake Specialist. The clients will remember their attorney’s name but will seldom remember the kind person where it all began. That is sometimes our job; to know where representation and advice begins....with a call for help.

CASE TOTALS

Advice and Representation	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Consumer/Finance							
Advice & Brief Service	1,853	1,676	1,437	1,772	2,166	2,551	2,943
Representation	380	329	259	410	523	632	558
Other Service	687	1,228	1,072	1,597	2,417	996	1,141
Mediation	16	26	13	16	12	13	42
Total	2,936	3,259	2,781	3,795	5,118	4,192	4,684
Family							
Advice & Brief Service	4,050	4,832	5,424	5,136	6,300	8,086	10,061
Representation	4,565	4,122	4,268	4,239	4,454	4,474	4,900
Other Service	4,059	4,420	5,029	6,524	6,895	174	166
Mediation	132	179	171	234	198	208	319
Total	12,806	13,553	14,892	16,133	17,847	12,942	15,446
Juvenile							
Advice & Brief Service	184	186	45	28	28	102	186
Representation	2,032	1,805	1,988	2,364	2,007	2,054	1,708
Other Service	404	130	173	236	271	293	218
Mediation	23	130	244	212	152	163	117
Total	2,643	2,251	2,450	2,840	2,458	2,612	2,229
Health							
Advice & Brief Service	221	251	305	415	457	594	745
Representation	41	85	120	147	131	96	126
Other Service	71	2	12	20	24	31	52
Mediation							
Total	333	338	437	582	612	721	923
Housing							
Advice & Brief Service	837	721	900	1,161	1,262	1,495	1,452
Representation	169	160	44	47	49	73	50
Other Service	365	149	78	94	140	274	264
Mediation	3	6	6	12	15	4	8
Total	1,374	1,036	1,028	1,314	1,466	1,846	1,774
Disability/Income Maintenance							
Advice & Brief Service	231	182	486	556	593	691	1,542
Representation	1,949	2,575	2,562	2,748	2,111	1,632	1,664
Other Service	841	819	429	179	378	24	5
Mediation							
Total	3,021	3,576	3,477	3,483	3,082	2,347	3,211
Miscellaneous*							
Advice & Brief Service	1,210	1,145	1,633	1,914	1,849	1,919	1,880
Representation	2,769	2,373	1,714	1,673	1,832	1,417	1,504
Other Service	537	244	404	600	350	49	56
Mediation	157	478	559	626	775	707	749
Total	4,673	4,240	4,310	4,813	4,806	4,092	4,189
TOTAL CASES	27,786	28,253	29,375	32,960	35,389	28,752	32,456

*includes education, employment, individual rights, Indian/Tribal law, wills, criminal/juvenile defense

STORIES

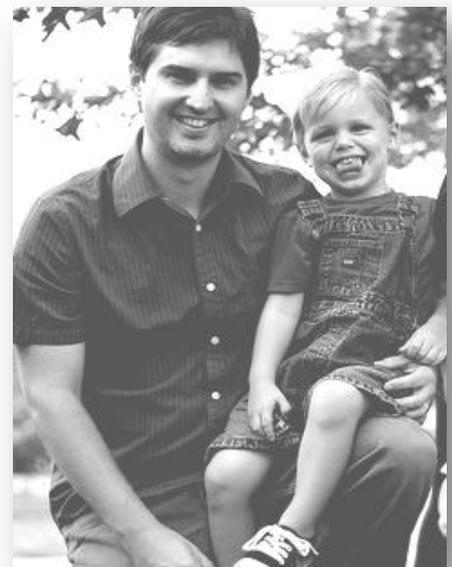


A mother came to the Children’s Advocacy and Resource Center (CARC) for legal assistance after her parental rights had been terminated in a child-in-need-of-care case several years prior. After a lot of hard work and cleaning her life up, she was able to contact the agency and become the placement for her teenage son. We filed the adoption. At the final adoption hearing, the Judge granted the adoption just prior to her son turning 18. This was a first for many involved – a biological parent after rights were terminated was able to adopt her son and the parent/child relationship was reestablished!

In 2009, KLS – Kansas City staff helped one woman obtain a divorce from her abusive husband who falsely accused her of selling his landscaping equipment. It felt good for staff to help someone who finally stood up for herself and her children by responding to her husband’s motions by discrediting him. She was awarded custody of her children and his parenting time was ordered to be supervised due to his behavior. She also was awarded maintenance. Since he had money to pay an attorney she could have been “railroaded” but instead she and her children are safe and moving forward. She and her children were very grateful for KLS.

A single dad came to KLS –Topeka for help to establish paternity and get an order for parenting time. Normally SRS would file on behalf of the mom, but she had not asked for assistance as she was working and was apparently satisfied with allowing the dad infrequent contact with the child. We established joint legal custody, residency with mom, child support from dad and parenting time for dad. We recently talked with him. He says the relationship between the parents is “more peaceful now” and he has his child on a regular basis. Obtaining court orders helped the parties set realistic expectations of each other, establish clear obligations and focus on the best interest of their child.

A KLS-Topeka staff attorney said, “Usually we hear only about irresponsible dads and ugly fights in court, but this is a refreshing example about how the legal process can be a very constructive resource for families.”



CLIENT PROFILES IN 2009

ETHNICITY

Asian	158
Black	2,156
Hispanic	1,761
Native American	248
White	15,221
Other Ethnic Group	<u>947</u>
TOTAL	20,491*

GENDER

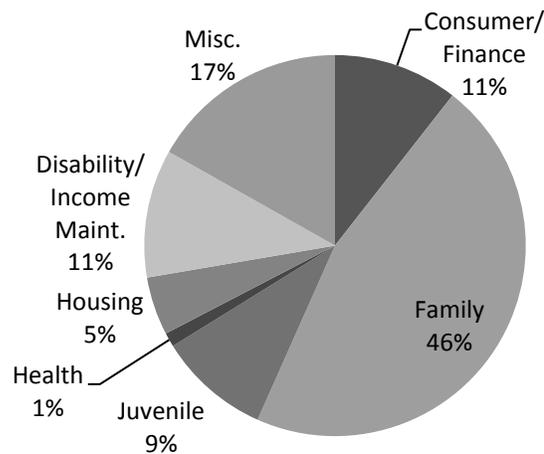
Female	13,246
Male	<u>7,245</u>
TOTAL	20,491

* Total clients for whom demographic information was available.

AGE

Ethnicity	Under 18	18-39	40 -59	60 and over	Total
Asian	16	94	24	24	158
Black	395	883	570	308	2,156
Hispanic	424	951	261	125	1,867
Native American	16	114	75	43	248
White	1,105	7,035	3,751	3,330	15,221
Other	<u>251</u>	<u>296</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>947</u>
TOTAL	2,207	9,373	5,031	3,880	20,491

CASE DISTRIBUTION



STORIES

A staff attorney at KLS – Wichita helped an 81-year-old man get out of the nursing home and stopped the sale of his home. He'd previously given his niece power of attorney to help him with his affairs. Then he had a mental breakdown. While he was in the psychiatric ward of the hospital, the niece was able to get a conservatorship over him and move him to a nursing home. Nursing home staff told us she left him at the nursing home with only one change of clothing and \$10.00/month spending money.



After the doctors got his medications adjusted, his mental health stabilized, but his niece refused his phone calls. After eight months in the nursing home, he called our office for help. We found him a new conservator and then Danielle worked with Senior Services in getting him set up with services, such as Meals on Wheels, etc. He now is back in his home and is doing very well. We are currently working on proceeding against the niece for all the property which disappeared from his home without proper accounting.



KLS staff in Seneca assisted a single mother with an SSI claim for her three year-old autistic son. We were able to quickly obtain benefits for the little boy which led to increased access to additional services. Even after his case was closed, mom called us for several months to proudly report the progress he was making at his new "school." It was gratifying to know that we had really helped make their lives better, and that her child would have a much brighter future because of what we did for them.

In 2009, KLS – Wichita staff represented an aunt in obtaining guardianship of her 14 year old niece and 16 year old nephew. The aunt called us in June about obtaining guardianship. Over Memorial Day weekend, the children's father murdered their mother (our client's sister) and then shot himself. Understandably, the children were very upset. They wanted to leave St. Louis and start a new life with their aunt in Wichita. We were able to establish a guardianship.

The aunt called back in November. There were a lot of struggles with the children adjusting to their parents' death, new school, new family and a new city. Overall, they were doing well, but they wanted the permanency of being adopted. We were able to represent the aunt and her husband in an adoption. We finalized the adoption on Christmas Eve – there was not a dry eye in the courtroom.



RECOGNIZING STAFF EXCELLENCE

2009 Recipient: Mary Jo Lowe

Mary Jo Lowe was recognized by the KLS Board of Directors in 2009 as the staff recipient of the Elizabeth Ferguson Excellence award. Mary Jo's day to day work involves ensuring compliance with the many regulations of the Legal Services Corporation. Mary Jo can look at the end result, but many people in KLS affect whether we do things according to the rules. To assure that, Mary Jo has to understand the regulations and be able to educate staff in the sometimes cumbersome activities that go along with compliance. She does an excellent job with that task. During 2008, the Legal Services Corporation published new rules. They want a stand-alone signature on client citizenship statements; they want KLS staff to clearly state the legal advice provided to thousands of clients each year; they want cases closed in the year of the last activity, even when that last activity was on December 31. Each of those rules required that our systems be reviewed and modified and that staff be taught to understand the changes. The big test for compliance was a mid 2008 on-site review by Legal Services Corporation staff. The visiting team left with praise for our compliance with LSC rules and spoke, particularly, of Mary Jo's role in our success.

Mary Jo is a "behind-the-scenes" staff person at KLS. The only clients she speaks to directly are in the elevator. Yet, without her dedication to grant compliance, KLS might not receive the \$2 million from Legal Services Corporation that provides the backbone of nearly all the legal programs KLS is able to undertake on behalf of clients. Her knowledge of our data keeping systems allow us to complete reports for nearly 100 different funding sources, telling them specifically what we did with the staff time associated with the funding. KLS served over 27,000 people in 2009. Only a fraction of this would be possible without the efforts of Mary Jo Lowe.

This award recognizes a staff person for outstanding performance resulting in a Substantial Benefit to a Client or Client Community. Rewarding Mary Jo Lowe with the Elizabeth Ferguson Excellence Award is a timely reminder that excellence occurs in many ways at Kansas Legal Services.



EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

HISTORY

Since 1995, Kansas Legal Services has provided employment and life-skills training to low income Kansans, helping them acquire and maintain family-supporting employment. KLS offers a variety of training services and works closely with clients in a one-on-one, supportive and nurturing environment to ensure that individual goals are met. KLS currently has employment training programs in six locations across the state.

Who is served by employment training programs?

Individuals enrolled in Kansas Legal Services' employment training programs are generally classified as "economically disadvantaged."

More specifically, this group includes:

- Those on TAF (cash assistance) who are required to be enrolled in job-related activities as prerequisite for cash assistance.
- Individuals with disabling mental or physical conditions.
- Low income individuals seeking to upgrade skills in order to obtain a higher-paying job.
- People whose employers wish to have them trained in a particular software application.
- Persons who are homeless and need assistance in overcoming persistent barriers to obtaining employment and housing.

Job Success – Success Story

One participant in Great Bend, "Sue," had struggled with employment due to a felony conviction. When she came to the Job Success program she had high aspirations for herself, but felt that she couldn't achieve anything. Sue was always very reserved yet jovial and at the age of 26, she had already lived a life that she wanted to put behind her. Her life goals: to be a nurse and to send her children to college. Providing for her children was the center of most of Sue's conversations with staff.

Sue had overlooked all the positive and wonderful skills she had to offer in the workforce. She had experience caring for people with disabilities and was also able to do sign language with ease. Job Success staff set her up in a work experience site. The Human Resource Coordinator was very willing to give Sue a shot, regardless of her felony criminal record. Sue wowed them in the interview, where all involved had nothing but great things to say about her. She was cleared to work within the facility due to her felony being several years ago and also, at her own request, was willing to take random drug screens to prove her sobriety.

Two weeks into the Work Experience program, the Human Resource Coordinator called to ask to hire Sue for fulltime employment. Every time staff spoke to HR, they were thanked for bringing such a talented, "spunky" and caring person to their business. Sue has been there since November 2009. Occasionally staff see her in the community and she grins from ear to ear commenting that she loves her job. It took one person to see the potential in Sue, which we believe is exactly what she needed.

• **Job Success** was created in 1999 by KLS. Job Success provides job readiness and life skills training to recipients of long term cash assistance and other persons entering the workforce for the first time. The different workshops address barriers to employment, life skills, soft skills and job readiness. Classes are open entry/open exit allowing clients to take part in all workshops or only selected ones. Job Success classes are located in Topeka, Garden City, Dodge City, Liberal, Great Bend, and Pratt.



• **Expecting Success** is a job readiness program started in 2009 through a contract with SRS. The program assists pregnant or post partum participants in the following twelve week curriculum: Nutrition Classes, Basic Math, Life Skills, Goal Setting, Organization/Prioritizing, Prenatal Information, Self-Esteem Building, Job Readiness, Assessments, and Pregnancy Prevention.

• **Custom Computer Training (CCT)** was created in 2001 in direct response to client needs for specialized computer training. Enhanced computer skills very often allow for advancement to better paying and more stable employment. CCT offers training in small group settings. CCT provides wide-ranging services, from specialized one-one-one training in particular software applications to job readiness. Services include:

- Open entry/open exit enrollment
- Microsoft Office
- Introduction to Windows
- Introduction to the Internet
- Job Readiness
- Microsoft Office Specialist Testing Center



Topeka Moving Ahead Program (T-MAP) was created in 2003 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Topeka Moving Ahead Program (T-MAP), a member of the Topeka-Shawnee County Continuum of Care, is a job readiness program that helps individuals and families break the cycle of homelessness through housing and employment. T-MAP assists participants in developing their skills, obtaining employment, and barrier resolution. The philosophy of T-MAP is to assist individuals with four major life transitions:

- From homelessness to personal and community support
- From addiction to recovery
- From hopelessness to an experience of self-efficacy
- From isolation to a career, economic self-sufficiency and a valued community role

Other services for T-MAP participants range from assistance in applying for public benefits, Social Security cards, and Kansas ID or driver's license (all of which may involve records search and legal rehabilitation), to finding a variety of solutions to barriers. Individual needs/referrals that need to be addressed are handled on a case-by-case basis. T-MAP's commitment to participants extends far beyond the thirteen-week curriculum. T-MAP has created a network of program alumni and staff who provide the caring and emotional support that is necessary to help each graduate successfully face their unique social and career needs.

STORIES

Before I was introduced to Topeka Moving Ahead Program (T-MAP), I had no idea what I was going to do when I was released from prison, but thankfully before my release, I found out that I was accepted into the T-MAP program. When I started T-MAP, I was very nervous and concerned about doing all the everyday things that normal people do because I had never lived on my own; never paid a bill; and as an adult, had never gone to a doctor's appointment outside of prison walls. In other words, everything was going to be new and scary.



I was very nervous about being able to get housing and employment due to my four felonies but T-MAP taught me how to turn a negative into a positive. They helped me get enrolled for housing and gave me the confidence to be able to take care of myself. In fact, next week I am moving into a house! Also, while in T-MAP, I did a two-week internship at the Helping Hands Humane Society and was hired on as a kennel technician, which eventually led to a supervisory promotion. T-MAP helped me in so many ways but mostly to build my self-esteem so that I could become a success.

Billie Jean

KLS – Kansas City represented a woman in a divorce case based on a short-term common law marriage. Our client has a medical condition which will likely leave her permanently disabled. The adverse and his attorney tried multiple times to argue that the parties were not common law married and that, even if they were, he should not have to pay maintenance because it was her choice to leave. We presented evidence to the court that our client was forced to leave only after enduring months of physical and severe emotional and verbal abuse. At the end of the hearing our client was awarded a significant amount of maintenance despite the fact that the marriage was so short and despite the fact that the adverse party repeatedly argued that he did not have money to pay. While our client continues to heal from both her illness and the abuse her husband inflicted upon her, she at least will have some money to start a safe and secure life.

Eleven year-old Gabe was severely physically and sexually abused and was placed in SRS custody. He was in and out of a variety of different foster homes before he was finally placed with his Aunt. Gabe was diagnosed with ADHD, mood disorder, and seizures. He had many problems at school and aggressive behaviors. He had been denied Social Security in the past. Gabe's Aunt was very committed to him. She would speak with his teacher on an almost daily basis; she had him in therapy, case management, and attendant care. She felt she could not keep Gabe and complete the adoption unless he received SSI and medical benefits. She could not provide him with psychiatric care of the degree that he needed without the medical benefits (her health insurance only covered very limited psychiatric care). KLS – Wichita staff prepared multiple function reports with family member and the daycare provider to document the limitations as well as supportive information from the mental health provider and school to obtain benefits for Gabe and secure his placement and future adoption by his Aunt.





2009 KANSAS LEGAL SERVICES ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During 2009, Kansas Legal Services provided life-changing services in the follow manner:

*1,674 victims of domestic violence obtained a Final Protection from Abuse order through the representation of a KLS advocate and funded by a variety of sources, including VOCA, DOJ, and Interest on Lawyer's Trust Account (KBF IOLTA)

*629 adults received steady income from Social Security or SSI disability benefits, successfully concluding a case with assistance from KLS, funded by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services

*331 cases were mediated, involving employment, insurance or family issues

*271 clients served in the three medical-legal clinics of Kansas Legal Services, including the Southwest Boulevard Family Medical Legal clinic, the Southeast Kansas Medical-Legal Clinic and the new Kansas-Focused Medical-Legal Partnership for Children clinic at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas.

*117 Kansas families got a fresh financial start from a bankruptcy filed by KLS offices

*7,531 hours invested by 117 staff in training and educational activities to improve the quality of services to clients, including special events supported by American College of Trial Lawyers and U.S. Department of Justice

*210 families met their child's special needs, due to successful Children's Social Security or SSI benefit claims, funded by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services

*806 participants sharpened their job readiness skills, through KLS Job training programs

*30 Topeka moms-to-be received life coaching and job readiness services through the NEW Expecting Success program

*2,332 hours of legal services provided at no cost to 616 clients from private attorneys, through KLS *pro bono* program or the retainer program (Increase of 1,000 hours since 2008)

*72 KLS staff attorneys and paralegals focused their time and talents making Equal Access to Justice a reality for low income Kansans

*1,341 parents received child support orders benefiting 2,430 children in divorce and paternity cases filed by KLS staff

*2,712 hours were contributed by legal interns or volunteers to advance the legal needs of KLS clients, including 3 student beneficiaries of the Brian Moline Scholarship Stipend for work in rural offices during Summer, 2009

*8,586 clients received timely legal advice as they faced family law, housing or consumer related or other crises in their lives

*42,195 applicants for KLS service, including 32,047 handled by Central Intake

What is mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary process in which a trained mediator facilitates communication and negotiation between parties in dispute. The goal of mediation is to reach an agreement that settles the dispute in a mutually satisfactory manner.

Mediations are conducted at a neutral location and in an informal and non-threatening environment. During the process, all participants have the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings regarding the matter in dispute. With the mediator, all individuals collectively create an agenda, identify the issue in dispute, define each individual's interests and create an agreement.

What are the benefits of mediation?

Mediation is non-judgmental.

Mediators do not act as advocates, render any opinion or decide how the dispute should be resolved. The mediator does not assess fault or take sides.

Participants control the outcome.

Individuals involved in mediation create their own agreement. The mediator's role is to help develop a realistic, workable solution that takes everyone's thoughts and feelings into consideration.

Mediation is confidential.

Kansas law (with some exceptions) makes mediations confidential. All notes made by mediators are destroyed after an agreement is reached.

Mediation can resolve issues quickly.

Mediation can resolve disputes quickly, as opposed to the months or years it may take in traditional legal proceedings.

Mediation can preserve relationships.

Mediation can help build a positive framework for future interactions between individuals. Mediation also models problem solving, listening and negotiation skills that can benefit participants long-term.

Mediation gets results.

Depending on the type of dispute, between 40 and 80 percent of disputes taken to mediation result in agreement.

How do people access mediation services?

KLS provides mediation in a wide variety of cases including insurance disputes, special education, employment discrimination, public accommodations and domestic matters such as custody and visitation. In 2009, more than 330 Kansans received mediation assistance from KLS, which receives referrals from local district courts, the Kansas Human Rights Commission, the Kansas Insurance Department and others. KLS also offers fee-based mediations on a sliding scale.

Contact Randy Hershey, Director of Mediation, at 785-232-5348.

MEDIATION SERVICES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The KLS mediation program has eight approved mediators providing civil rights, employment, domestic, truancy, permanency, offender-victim, juvenile, insurance and other mediation services throughout the state. Mediation services complement the work of KLS by providing a non-adversarial dispute resolution method for appropriate cases.

- **Access to Justice Mediations (ATJ)** are funded by the Office of Judicial Administration under the direction of the Kansas Supreme Court. ATJ funding enables court personnel to refer clients directly to KLS offices for mediation services at no cost to participants. Most ATJ mediations involve post-divorce custody issues.
- **Human Rights Mediations** offer voluntary mediation to individuals involved in employment, housing, racial and other profiling, and public accommodation filed with the Kansas Human Rights Commission. The Kansas Bar Foundation, with Interest on Lawyer's Trust Accounts funding, also provides support to this program.
- **Victim – Offender Mediation** is an alternative to the juvenile justice system. Through restorative justice, offenders are held accountable for their choices and the victims are empowered through mediation to be part of the solution.
- **Kansas Insurance Department Mediations** are provided to consumers and insurance companies who are in dispute over property and casualty claims in matters referred to the KID.

Employment Mediation

The complainant was working in the plant and was still under her probationary period of employment. She missed work due to a miscarriage and was terminated since they have strict rules about attendance during probationary period regardless of the reason. In mediation, the parties and the mediator worked out an agreement to put her back to work, in a better environment, and reinstated benefits such as health insurance. This was especially beneficial to the complainant since she was pregnant again, with very limited income. They signed the agreement at the table and put her back to work in a matter of days.



*Mediation can
solve problems
quickly*

STORIES



A young man and his mother had made a complaint that he was a victim of racial profiling by a law enforcement agency. Through several mediation sessions the parties came to know one another better and to grasp the need for some changes to occur. The young man and his family had been “spotlighted” as being suspect, primarily by one particular officer, mostly due to the criminal history of a relative and not the young man’s or current immediate family’s actions. The law enforcement’s internal affairs took these complaints seriously and investigated, determining there were valid issues of concern (though not racial profiling) and took specific measures to

prevent further harassment. At the same time, the young man became aware of proactive steps to prevent being targeted unnecessarily, as well as how to make complaints known more effectively to enhance remedial responses.

KLS – Topeka received a referral for a children’s SSI case for a young teenager who entered foster care with significant mental health issues. She was in foster care because her mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness and was no longer able to meet her children’s daily needs. KLS was successful in obtaining SSI benefits for the young woman in foster care which allowed her to access important mental health services and received aid from the State of Kansas SRS in meeting her needs. The KLS Children’s Advocacy Resource Center (CARC) also assisted the mother in establishing her advance directives and guardianship to implement on her death with regard to her other children. This gave the mother such peace of mind that she was able to enjoy her final months in peace.

In early 2009, a staff attorney at KLS – Topeka was able to assist a client with the extension of her protective order. The abuser had been extremely physically and emotionally abusive to the woman and their four children for the past thirteen years. He objected to the protection order extension by stating he had not actually talked with his wife or their children; so therefore, the order should expire. The KLS attorney was able to present evidence of the Police Chief’s investigation of videotapes showing the abuser not talking to our client but following her around in the grocery store and standing in the next checkout lane watching her. The Police Chief also testified about his observations of how our client reacted to the abuser just standing there, without saying anything. The Judge found this was enough contact by the abuser and extended her final PFA order an additional year.



FUNDING AND STAFF FIGURES

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2009
WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS 2006 - 2008

	2009	2008	2007	2006
Legal Services Corporation	\$2,568,003	\$2,315,741	\$2,299,552	\$2,145,503
Department of SRS – State of Kansas	605,321	1,355,414	1,065,280	1,165,931
Access to Justice	866,571	845,782	876,338	1,157,463
US Department of HUD	184,996	244,889	220,778	223,774
IOLTA & Bar Sponsored	833,905	827,341	850,234	899,202
City/County Grants	1,077,743	972,235	1,029,394	1,069,377
Area Agencies on Aging	275,991	331,641	310,747	285,958
Custom Computer Training	155,983	119,045	144,242	181,747
Mediation Contracts & Fees	129,842	165,158	182,284	198,848
United Way	267,953	275,477	260,309	270,108
WORKs	0	84,345	331,168	140,068
Office of the Governor & Department of Justice	426,008	511,594	456,131	483,576
Farm Counseling	89,979	66,909	82,279	115,253
Office of Judicial Administration - GALSC	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Social Security Administration	2,529	45,763	62,302	124,294
Job Success	211,395	235,746	232,898	228,951
Foundation Grants	165,000	165,000	150,000	100,000
Court Awards	11,696	22,873	23,325	12,267
Interest Income	1,900	8,990	9,987	12,033
Medical-Legal Partnerships	142,360	0	0	0
Other Miscellaneous	220,079	236,082	393,608	423,479
Total Revenues	<u>\$8,387,256</u>	<u>\$8,980,026</u>	<u>\$9,131,856</u>	<u>\$9,387,832</u>

STAFF TOTALS

	2009	2008	2007	2006
Full-time equivalent employees	140	139	157	165

EXPENSES

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2009
WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS FOR 2006 - 2008

	2009	2008	2007	2006
Salaries	\$5,251,232	\$5,398,481	\$5,765,435	\$6,039,497
Employee Benefits and Payroll Taxes	1,208,505	1,197,250	1,167,658	1,240,273
Rent, Parking, Utilities and Maintenance	708,630	718,425	732,292	684,498
Equipment Rental and Maintenance	104,905	86,077	110,058	104,023
Office Supplies, Printing and Postage	199,734	238,159	243,788	256,008
Telephone	90,671	88,582	128,219	174,827
Travel	95,178	109,008	138,621	169,393
Training	89,002	74,162	112,061	97,564
Library Upkeep	58,234	43,674	47,601	46,332
Insurance	48,623	74,306	66,924	67,760
Litigation Expenses	26,812	32,284	31,657	54,496
Audit, Consulting and Contract Services	284,999	258,032	357,106	255,502
Private Attorney Retainers	37,929	65,326	70,024	70,046
Kansas Bar Foundation Subgrant	46,000	46,000	46,000	46,000
Depreciation	81,555	74,867	52,406	42,634
Other	83,335	83,471	132,259	126,395
Total Expenses	<u>\$8,333,788</u>	<u>\$8,589,105</u>	<u>\$9,202,266</u>	<u>\$9,475,248</u>

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Topeka - Custom Computer Training

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785-354-8311 fax

Pratt - Job Success

Pratt SRS Office
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Pratt KS 67124
Phone: (620) 672-5955
Fax: (620) 672-9391

Great Bend - Job Success

1305 Patton Road
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Topeka - Job Success, Expecting Success

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A LIFE LIVED IN FEAR IS A LIFE HALF LIVED

It is said the above quote is a Spanish proverb. I believe anyone who has worked with those less fortunate or those who are victims of domestic violence knows this proverb to be true. We know fear. It is seen in the eyes of clients that pass the threshold of any Kansas Legal Services' office. I believe poverty often encourages fear. When you live in poverty, you lie awake trying to decide whether to pay to keep your family warm or to feed them. You are afraid you will be judged based upon your appearance. You are afraid you will not be given the opportunity of employment. Fear....constant, hidden just beneath the surface at all times. Society tends to be so judgmental when it comes to what you wear, what you drive, where you live and how you look; never looking beyond outward appearances and into the heart and life of the individual. Fortunately for those who are low income, the staff of Kansas Legal Services (KLS) see the need inside of that person. But for every three we represent, two are turned away.

Victims of domestic violence know fear on another level and, if they choose to stay in that turbulent environment, not only are their lives half lived but so are the lives of the innocent children who also live in fear. Years ago victims had few options to obtain help. What went on behind closed doors, stayed behind closed doors. Abusers thought their actions were right and by example, taught their children that abuse was acceptable. Thanks to so many different funding sources and a better understanding, victims are able to find help and start a new life without constant fear. Legal assistance is available, regardless of income.

Poverty knows love and happiness. I knew as a child that poverty did not govern happiness. My mother told me stories of her childhood. She was raised one of eight children, the daughter of a poor cotton farmer. Her mother passed away at the young age of 34. My mother told the best stories of her family. They had very little but they were rich in love. She told of a time when she jumped from the barn hayloft and landed on a pitchfork, driving it through her ankle. Because they barely had enough money to feed eight children, they certainly had no money for a doctor. So her father poured kerosene into her open wound and wrapped a bandage around it. She carried the scar on that ankle until her dying day. I always thought her stories were of poverty long ago and surely it was not like that in my lifetime.

I came to Kansas Legal Services, having lived for 23 years as the victim of domestic abuse in an upper middle class household. I had finally gained enough courage to leave the abuser and my first place of employment was with KLS in 1996 after filing for divorce. My eyes were opened to a whole new world. Those stories of poverty were not just long-ago stories; they were the stories of thousands of people throughout this country. I also learned I was not alone as a battered woman. My story was the story of many, many others who also live in fear.

A perfect world would hold no poverty and no fear but we do not live in a perfect world. What we can do is set a goal of making a difference in the world in which we do live. Because those of us at Kansas Legal Services look into the lives of those who live in fear and despair, we offer clients the opportunity of living without fear. *A Life Lived in Fear is a Life Half Lived* and we at KLS want to help fill those lives with hope and encouragement. It is my own personal goal as Statewide *Pro Bono* Coordinator to continue to encourage attorneys to volunteer and to place more clients with those volunteers, thus bringing hope and encouragement to more lives throughout Kansas. Wouldn't it be nice if we each set a personal goal to somehow make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate and, someday, no one will be turned away?

Becky Wyre
Statewide *Pro Bono* Coordinator

