



Kansas Legal Services

2019

ANNUAL REPORT

Marilyn Harp, Executive Director

kansaslegalservices.org

@KLSforkansas

Message from the Executive Director

As I sit in my basement, watching staff continue to meet the urgent needs of our clients, despite an abrupt work from home move and with Courts closed, it is hard to celebrate last year. It is hard to remember last year.

Still, I will try to use this opportunity to highlight the many accomplishments of last year, and there were several. In chronological order, I highlight:

Spring: We filmed and posted three videos to add to the two we did in 2018, to assist self-represented persons in preparing for and appearing in Court. Most popular is Divorce 101, a crash course in paperwork, legal terms, timelines and resources. These have been viewed nearly 700 times.

June: We began accepting clients into the Kansas Clean Slate program, a collaboration with Harvard Law School Access to Justice Lab. The program assists Kansans in obtaining expungements and tracks the impact of the expungement on their lives over the next three years. We continue to recruit clients for this project, through which we are providing attorney support for the expungement at no charge.

October: We saw a major expansion of our Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) program, which provides emergency legal assistance such as filing for restraining or protective orders, obtaining emergency custody orders and visitation rights for victims of crime. The program also includes our Elder Rights Project, focused on elder abuse in Kansas.

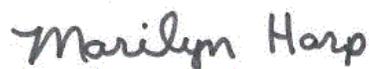
October: Our Trivia Night fundraiser expanded statewide, with events in five of our field office locations. This will become an annual event as local firms challenge for bragging rights. KU won the KBA-sponsored Law School Challenge.

October: KLS was approved as a host agency for retired, inactive, and now single employer-licensed attorneys, under Rule 712B. We were also able to file applications to sponsor nearly 30 attorneys to provide pro bono assistance to KLS clients.

November: We began our Kin-Tech Family First project, a partnership with the Department for Children and Families funded through the historic Family First Prevention Act, a national initiative. This project is designed to divert children from foster care, by creating formal alternate care arrangements and supporting those families who take on the financial burden of raising children.

If it seems like the year was loaded toward the end, you would be right.

Next year, this time, I will be bragging again, about our great staff and how they accomplished a near seamless transition of services from office to home in March, 2020. Staff understands that our clients need us and continue to provide much needed legal services every day.



Marilyn Harp
Executive Director
Kansas Legal Services

The cover photo is by Dorothy Burgess, KLS-Wichita paralegal and specialist with the KLS Kin-Tech program.

What once was a graffiti-covered grain elevator in north Wichita, is now covered with beautiful artwork, the world's largest acrylic mural by one artist.

Called "El Sueño Original/The Original Dream," the mural is a celebration of the Mexican laborers that built the train tracks a century ago, and of the many different ethnicities of people you'll find in the north end of Wichita. The message that comes with El Sueño Original was explained as "The beauty of migration as a fundamental right." by the group Horizontes, which sponsored the mural and promotes artistic expression and activism.

Artist and community organizer Armando Minjarez immigrated to Kansas in 2001 and designed, directed, and painted this large work of art.

WHAT WE DO . . .

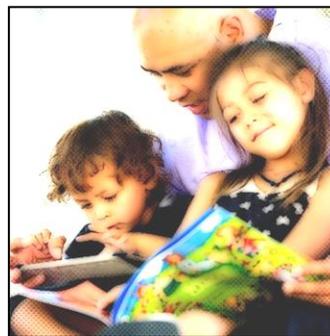
KLS helped “Anna,” whose son had agreed to sell her a modest home for ten years of monthly payments. She made payments for ten years and asked for the deed. Anna’s son claimed that since he hadn’t cashed the last 12 checks, he hadn’t been paid. There was no written agreement to substantiate their arrangement. The son declined to transfer the house to Anna. A KLS attorney was able to settle this case, after litigation was filed, and Anna received ownership of the home with the amount of money she had already paid.



KLS assisted a woman, “Callie,” living in a rural area, in obtaining a divorce from her abusive husband, “Max.” Max’s divorce action tried to manipulate and intimidate Callie to give up her home and take on questionable debt as part of the divorce. KLS’ representation resulted in a positive outcome as staff used the discovery process to counter Max’s manipulation. Once Max was required to provide proof of his financial and other actions, he offered a settlement that gave Callie her home, vehicle, and no outstanding debt. KLS’ representation not only allowed Callie to escape from an abusive marriage, it also gave her a fresh start financially in her home and with a good vehicle.



KVC referred a client, “Mark,” to us because he wanted to serve as a relative placement for family members in foster care with the goal of adopting them in the future. Mark had been rejected due to a juvenile record. After getting help from KLS to get an expungement, Mark was approved as a foster placement and is moving forward with the plans to adopt his family members and raise them with his own children.



KLS helped an elderly man, “Joe,” who had head injuries and had been living on the street. KLS staff was doing their outreach at the day shelter for homeless persons, and met him there. KLS got Joe Social Security disability benefits, including a back award. Joe is in a safe haven right now, and with the help of social service staff, will move into an assisted living facility. This is a great result for an elderly man who worked most of his life and will now get to live better for the rest of it.

KANSAS LEGAL SERVICES IS LEGAL AID IN KANSAS

As one of the programs born during the War on Poverty in 1964, Kansas Legal Services (KLS) provides legal services as it seeks to alleviate the burdens of poverty on low income Kansans. KLS has eleven legal services field offices and two mediation offices located across the state. KLS works with the Kansas Bar Association and its members to supplement staff resources by involving private attorneys in legal work on behalf of low income Kansans.

GOALS

Kansas Legal Services is legal aid in Kansas, providing equal access to justice for the most vulnerable Kansans. In 2019, the Board of Directors examined our mission and reaffirmed it with this simple statement.

We have progressively focused efforts on special needs individuals, victims of domestic violence and crime, the homeless, children in foster care, consumers with housing and debt disputes, the elderly, those with disabling conditions, individuals seeking access to public benefits, and those seeking mediation services.

LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

FAMILY LAW

Through Access to Justice, Legal Services Corporation, United Way, Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) and other funding sources, KLS represents thousands of low income persons 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 (ATJ) funding has increased the number of family law clients KLS has been able to serve. Due in large part to ATJ funding, KLS assists many low income Kansans with domestic law matters.

KLS has expanded its funding base to include services that further mitigate the effects of poverty and help Kansans obtain better jobs, housing and further opportunities to support their families. This includes assisting in criminal record clearing, resolving debt and housing disputes and promoting ways to easily access self-help legal resources.

ELDER LAW

KLS cooperates with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services as a legal service provider in the state aging network. Older Americans Act funds are combined with Legal Services Corporation, county Mill Levy funds 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.

(888) 353-5337

Kansas Elder Law Hotline

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

The Guardian Ad Litem Support Center (GALSC) is a statewide program that provides technical assistance, 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. The Foster Care Helpline is part of the GALSC.

Victims of Crime Act Grant (VOCA) is administered by the Governor's Grants Program to assist all victims of crime in Kansas, with priority given to legal services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

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. KLS has committed resources ensuring that applicants get benefits to which they are entitled. 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 the Department for Children and Families. Obtaining SSI cash and medical benefits for children often makes home placement possible.

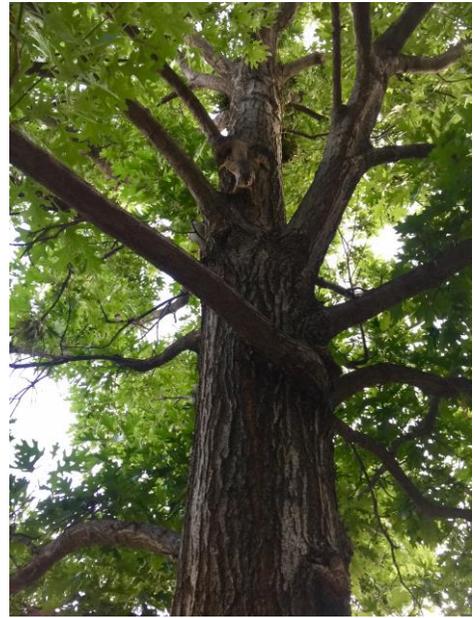
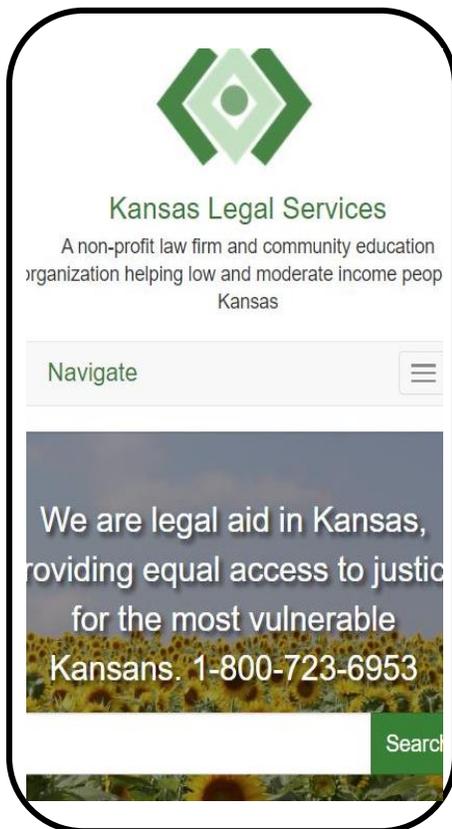


Photo by KLS-Wichita staffer Rhonda Brambley



KLS Website Popularity Still Growing

Research shows that 91 percent of U.S. households have access to the internet through a phone, tablet or computer. The KLS website, [kansaslegalservices.org](https://www.kansaslegalservices.org), has continued to grow in size and popularity. In 2019, 329,618 persons visited the website, an 11.5% increase over 2018. For the first time, over 60% of our users now access us from their phones.

In 2019, self-represented litigants created 9,952 documents through our document assembly forms on the KLS website.

Kansas Legal Services developed a website exclusively for pro bono attorneys, [klsprobono.org](https://www.klsprobono.org), to make volunteering for KLS easy and convenient for busy attorneys.

<https://www.kansaslegalservices.org>

Notable Projects in 2020

Kansas Legal Services awarded grant to help children at risk for foster care

On October 1, 2019, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly and Secretary of the Department for Children and Families, Laura Howard, announced that Kansas Legal Services is one of 18 recipients of Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) grants. The grants are aimed at implementing evidence-based prevention programs to reduce the number of children entering foster care, and prevent foster care placements for those at risk. Kansas Legal Services will provide legal assistance in adoption and guardianships for kinship caregivers of children at risk of entering the child welfare system.

KLS is the first legal aid program in the country awarded funds to provide legal assistance through this federal program.



Karen Panuco gives some pointers to debtors dealing with debt collectors.

The Divorce 101 video is especially helpful for those people wanting to do their own. It explains common legal terms not familiar to most people, and helps make the legal process less intimidating.

Staff of KLS wrote, directed and starred in the videos. The videos were made possible through funding from Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grants Program. The videos are a production of BradAss Films, with special thanks to Brad Johnson and his crew.

Allison Perez walks viewers through “Divorce 101.”

KLS Completes Three Videos in 2019

KLS completed work on three videos, Your Rights in Debt Collection, Dealing with Debt Collectors, and Divorce 101. These videos join the two videos made in 2018, Getting Ready for Court and Going to Court.

The videos are short, easy-to-understand-guides to common questions asked by self-represented litigants, or those who want to take care of legal issues on their own.

All five videos may be accessed here -

<https://www.kansaslegalservices.org/node/kls-videos>



Kansas Bar Association and KLS Hold Trivia Nights in October “Celebrate Pro Bono Month”

Offices across the state participated in the statewide KLS Trivia Night on October 2nd to kick off an entire month of “Celebrate Pro Bono,” with events in five of our field office locations—Kansas City, Emporia, Manhattan, Topeka and Wichita. KU won the KBA-sponsored Law School Challenge.

KLS Thanks All of Our Pro Bono Attorneys!

KLS recruited private attorneys to provide legal assistance to **725** clients in 2019. These attorneys provided **1,155** hours of legal services at no cost.

1,882 hours were contributed by **19** law student volunteers to advance the legal needs of **702** KLS clients. Helping others and preparing new attorneys to continue to give back during their careers on a pro bono basis is a win – win for all.

KLS – Kansas Bar Foundation Expungement Project

The KLS Volunteer Lawyer Program, led by Pro Bono Director Christine Campbell, partnered with two local bar associations and a corporation to conduct expungement clinics in Emporia, Pittsburg and Wichita. KLS staff, bar members and other volunteers educated and screened potential participants. Eligible participants were matched with volunteer lawyers.

The benefits of the program are that expungements help low income Kansans compete for better jobs, and the clinics enhance the benevolent community reputation of each local bar. The effort turned out to be a terrific success! KLS plans to continue the clinics into 2020 and beyond.

Highlights:

- During **Pro Bono Week**, the **Emporia** project took place. On October 23rd, we held an info meeting, and on October 24th and 25th, we had appointment times. We partnered with the Work Force Center in Emporia, and 15 people signed up for appointments. Thirteen people appeared and were advised and/or had their expungement forms filled out.
- **Pittsburg** was on schedule to complete 50 expungements for 2019.
- **Wichita** partnered with **Koch Industries** again this year to screen 110 people at the **Wichita Library** in September. **Koch** volunteer attorneys completed 60 expungements for the 30 qualified individuals in 2019.
- **Kansas City** offered expungements for eight weeks in summer, 2019, through the District Attorney's office and utilized KLS staff and volunteer attorneys to help with the weekly clinics.

We thank the **Kansas Bar Foundation** for their generous support of this program!

2019 Elizabeth Ferguson Award Recipient: KRISTIN MAUN

Kristin has been with KLS since 2013, after serving as an Equal Justice Works Americorps Legal Fellow with Legal Aid of West Virginia, working to meet the legal needs of veterans and military families in the economically depressed region of Martinsburg, WV. That work gave her keen insight into the challenges facing disadvantaged populations and helped develop tireless advocacy skills on behalf of clients facing powerful opponents.

Kristin has distinguished herself in the area of consumer finance. She routinely defends third party debt collection actions with zeal, forcing collection firms to abandon claims they have no ability to prove and often winning Court ordered sanctions against large firms that refuse to comply with Court discovery orders.

She has tackled mortgage foreclosure cases with similar success, a typical example of her work is described in the attachment.

Kristin leads our statewide working group on mortgage foreclosures and community development, sharing vital legal resources and insight gained not only in her own practice, but also as an active member of the National Association of Consumer Advocates. She has won numerous attorney fee awards against adverse debt collectors for their inappropriate legal behavior including violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Kristin has proven herself to be a dedicated, talented and tireless advocate for our clients in specialized legal matters that are critical to their lives. She has shown leadership within KLS to share her knowledge and expertise. She represents KLS beyond the firm in an exceptional light.



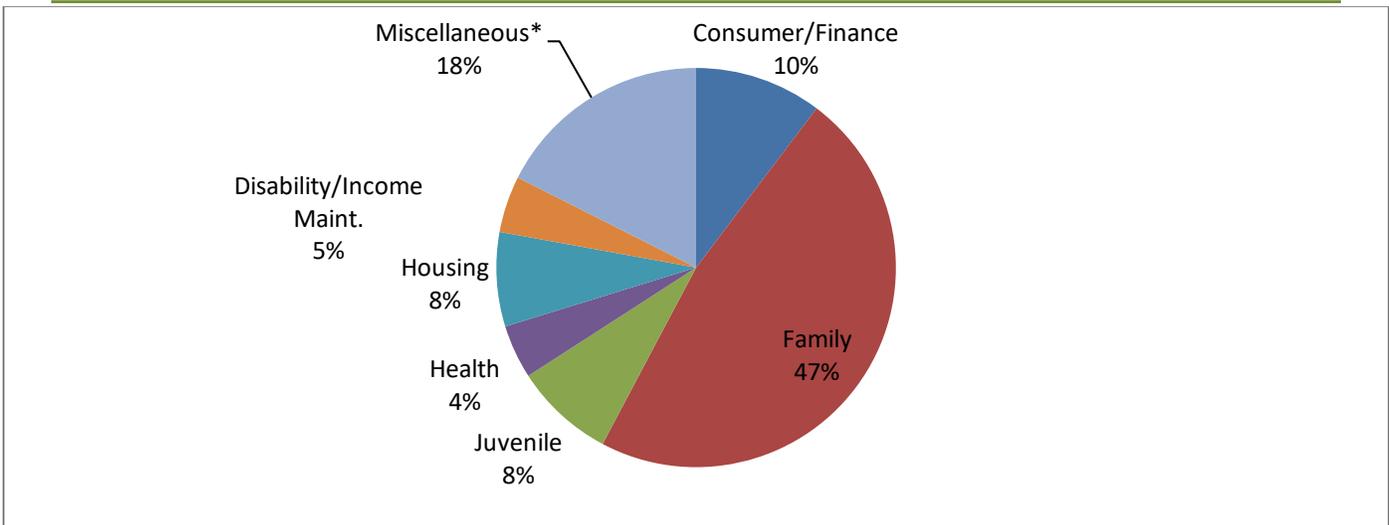
Kristin Maun, left, with ED Marilyn Harp.

CASE TOTALS

		2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Consumer/Finance	Advice & Brief Service	1,480	1,301	1,261	1,358	1,627	1,958
	Representation	144	226	201	200	160	115
	Other Service	730	790	757	637	621	795
	Mediation	0	0	2	0	1	1
	Total	2,354	2,317	2,221	2,195	2,409	2,869
Family	Advice & Brief Service	5,213	3,921	4,107	4,430	5,185	5,755
	Representation	2,734	3,224	3,232	3,258	2,998	3,008
	Other Service	2,756	3,323	3,902	4,451	4,529	4,852
	Mediation	134	138	106	143	125	132
	Total	10,837	10,606	11,347	12,282	12,837	13,747
Juvenile	Advice & Brief Service	360	240	226	240	326	368
	Representation	1,085	1,089	955	1,135	1,101	1,208
	Other Service	407	458	475	404	481	373
	Mediation	4	11	7	2	6	7
	Total	1,856	1,798	1,663	1,781	1,914	1,956
Health	Advice & Brief Service	907	154	222	230	231	249
	Representation	62	31	24	23	2	3
	Other Service	26	40	47	36	30	46
	Mediation	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Total	995	225	293	289	264	298
Housing	Advice & Brief Service	1,410	1,021	930	1,098	1,342	1,509
	Representation	109	351	305	314	41	64
	Other Service	223	220	166	97	85	127
	Mediation	1	3	0	3	1	5
	Total	1,743	1,595	1,401	1,512	1,469	1,705
Disability/Income Maint.	Advice & Brief Service	240	159	207	247	400	503
	Representation	613	724	696	721	693	585
	Other Service	193	313	258	229	158	185
	Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1,046	1,196	1,161	1,197	1,251	1,273
Miscellaneous*	Advice & Brief Service	1,804	1,427	828	988	2,313	2,380
	Representation	1,399	2,152	1,894	1,978	669	821
	Other Service	649	700	645	414	371	598
	Mediation	158	150	135	121	130	156
	Total	4,010	4,429	3,502	3,501	3,483	3,955
	TOTAL CASES	22,841	22,166	21,588	22,757	23,627	25,803

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

CASE DISTRIBUTION



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

CLIENT PROFILES IN 2019

GENDER	
Female	11,841
Male	5,695
Transgender	<u>16</u>
TOTAL	15,552

AGE/ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	Age Group				Total
	Under 18	18-35	36-59	60 & over	
Asian	6	63	67	26	162
Black	262	782	864	387	2,295
Hispanic	119	565	480	116	1,280
Multi-Racial	5	302	181	42	530
Nat Haw/Other Pac Islander	1	10	11	3	25
Native American	6	95	104	40	245
Nat Amer/Alaskan Native	4	9	8	2	23
Other Race	20	102	111	74	307

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 facilitate greater understanding between parties in dispute, and attempt 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 mutual agreement resolving the dispute as determined by the parties.

MEDIATION SERVICES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The KLS mediation program has eight approved mediators providing civil rights, employment, domestic, juvenile permanency, 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 (ATJ) Mediations** are funded by the Office of Judicial Administration under the direction of the Kansas Supreme Court. ATJ funding enables parties' access to KLS offices for mediation services at no cost to participants who qualify. Most ATJ mediations involve post-divorce custody and parenting time issues.
- **Human Rights Mediations** offer voluntary mediation to individuals involved in employment, housing and public accommodation discrimination claims filed with the Kansas Human Rights Commission.
- **For Fee Mediations** are offered to parties in domestic

matters on a sliding fee basis when neither party is ATJ-eligible, and is available to parties in some civil matters at a reasonable hourly rate.

**For More Information, Please Call
785-232-5348**



This photo is by KLS – Wichita paralegal Dorothy Burgess.

FUNDING AND STAFF FIGURES

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019
WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS 2016 - 2018

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Legal Services Corporation	\$2,892,791	\$2,861,021	\$2,633,406	\$2,714,623
Department of DCF – State of Kansas	240,503	206,094	200,183	181,100
Access to Justice	800,000	800,002	794,300	788,600
Kansas Governor’s Grant Program	671,791	518,397	533,933	371,907
IOLTA & Bar Sponsored	206,164	245,476	322,625	418,403
Kansas Bar Foundation	323,104	298,200	180,307	69,355
Lawyer Giving	56,606	47,931	45,098	31,515
City/County Grants	739,370	729,809	773,867	742,711
Area Agencies on Aging	305,356	300,388	300,888	272,240
United Way	135,060	143,582	162,114	185,130
U.S. Department of Justice	150,181	193,310	178,166	23,714
Low Income Taxpayer Clinic	44,924	43,815	42,107	40,000
Mediation Contracts & Fees	115,000	115,000	115,000	115,000
Medical-Legal Partnerships	120,000	119,332	120,000	82,575
Independence Charitable Trust	168,694	160,889	155,000	156,637
Court Awards	283,163	333,716	404,269	306,252
Cy Pres Awards	0	5,504	10,596	0
Interest Income	12,552	7,725	2,296	1,370
Farm Counseling	700	4,908	7,920	9,767
Other Miscellaneous	92,575	84,368	111,882	122,108
Computer Training	0	1,900	9,600	9,400
Total Revenues	<u>\$7,358,534</u>	<u>\$7,221,365</u>	<u>\$7,103,557</u>	<u>\$6,642,407</u>

STAFF TOTALS

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Full-time equivalent employees	94.9	97.3	104	101

EXPENSES

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019

WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS FOR 2016 - 2018

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Salaries	\$4,728,872	\$4,622,230	\$4,460,628	\$4,242,168
Employee Benefits & Payroll Taxes	1,184,437	1,107,908	1,100,626	934,989
Rent, Parking, Utilities & Maintenance	541,614	590,174	554,034	507,878
Equipment Rental and Maintenance	54,286	80,866	45,991	44,996
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	105,341	108,281	106,394	116,027
Telephone	110,663	116,584	109,009	107,556
Travel	71,895	76,727	70,030	63,921
Training	52,874	49,542	41,115	41,421
Electronic Research & Library	66,833	55,172	27,472	27,790
Insurance	44,749	40,966	37,454	37,903
Litigation Expenses	26,311	24,379	25,027	31,108
Audit, Consulting & Contract Services	248,637	239,930	189,726	242,677
Private Bar Involvement	43,422	46,701	48,509	42,864
Depreciation	39,254	33,387	48,037	51,296
Other	69,453	79,757	77,703	70,858
Total Expenses	<u>\$7,388,641</u>	<u>\$7,272,604</u>	<u>\$6,941,755</u>	<u>\$6,563,451</u>



This photo is by KLS - Wichita staffer Rhonda Brambley.

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Managing Attorney: Rhonda Sullivan

**Application Line:
1-800-723-6953**

**Or apply online:
www.kansaslegalservices.org**

The photo on the back cover is by Rhonda Brambley, member of the KLS -
Wichita office staff.



Keep your face always toward the sunshine – and the shadows will fall behind you.

M. B. Whitman