



COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES
IN EAST PALO ALTO

Annual Impact Report

2022



Mural by Mural Music & Arts Project

From the Executive Director

Firstly, a huge thank you to all of our supporters and volunteers who make our work possible. As the new Executive Director at CLSEPA, I'm looking forward to leading this organization out of the pandemic, as we all readjust to our changed world.

The pandemic forced us into hard transitions and for many of our community members, the ripple effects of losing family and loved ones to COVID-19, wage loss, mounting debt, and inflation will be felt for years to come. The reality is that pandemic-related challenges have exacerbated already daunting systemic injustice experienced by low-income families and communities of color, but these challenges will not define us. Instead, the hardships we've all faced will drive us to be better.

At CLSEPA, we will continue to embrace community-led solutions by partnering with our clients and community members, and we will also embrace change and continue to evolve how we provide community-based direct legal services.

As I grow into my new role as ED, I am humbled by the breadth and depth of the work that goes into running a nonprofit; I am inspired by the level of service and dedication of our staff; and I am grateful for the legacy of my predecessors in sustaining an organization that is based in the community and working towards justice. Whether you are a long-time CLSEPA supporter or are reading about us for the first time, thank you for joining our mission.



Katrina Logan

Executive Director
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto


About the Organization

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) was founded in 2002 by and for the community. Several founding community activists remained on the Board of Directors for years following our incorporation, and we have continued to recruit Board members from the East Palo Alto community to maintain grounded leadership. CLSEPA has deep-seated connections with local churches, schools, tenants' associations, fellow nonprofits, and law firms and are a trusted source of legal guidance.

We regularly collaborate together on clinics and know-your-rights presentations, and we have submitted numerous successful collaborative funding proposals with local nonprofit partners. We are funded by a combination of regional philanthropic foundations, ranging from large foundations to smaller family funds, the State and local governments, individual donors, and corporate and law firm partners. The impact that our supporters make is multiplied by thousands of hours contributed by our pro bono partners, valued at millions of dollars.

To address systemic inequities and promote transformative change, CLSEPA upholds the rights of local community members by:

- Fighting to keep immigrant families together and on a path to permanency in the U.S.
- Disrupt the displacement of low-income tenants and communities of color and fight to keep tenants in their homes
- Removing barriers to better jobs and fighting for economic justice for local community members and their families

A photograph of a young man with dark hair and a goatee, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and a gold chain. He is sitting outdoors on a wooden chair, looking down at an open book he is holding. The background shows a stone wall and some greenery.

Pictured: Former CLSEPA client, Jonathan, currently studying to be a doctor at UC Davis Medical School.

At A Glance

In 2022, we provided legal services, education and outreach, and rental assistance in **3,886 cases** benefitting **7,575 individuals**. This includes **14,146 hours** of pro bono service provided by **551 attorneys** valued at **\$10,971,858**.

Housing

Our Housing Program was able to get **\$530,662 in rent debt waived**. They recovered **\$202,927 in settlements** and assisted **552 residents with rental assistance**, the total of which was **\$749,163**. Their efforts **preserved the housing of 608 community members** and enabled a **soft-landing move out to 336 community members**.

Economic Advancement

Our Economic Advancement Program (EAP) won **\$338,944 in total awards/settlements** recovered for low-wage workers and had **89 petitions for dismissals** granted/records cleaned – **an 88% success rate**.

Immigration

Our Immigration Program **prevented deportation in 54 cases**, **obtained citizenship in 21 cases**, and **obtained employment authorization in 185 cases**, allowing immigrant community members to safely work in the community while their case is ongoing.

Hear Their Stories

These are the stories about two people — Brea and Bonnie — who sought **CLSEPA's help with record clearance and housing.**



Brea's Path to Clearance

Brea has struggled to find permanent employment and to access better paying jobs because of her record. She worked with CLSEPA to file dismissals for her cases and also filed a petition reducing her traffic fines to protect her meager income. Brea was successful in getting most of the cases granted in the spring of 2022. Unfortunately, the court denied dismissals in two cases but Brea was determined to clear her record.

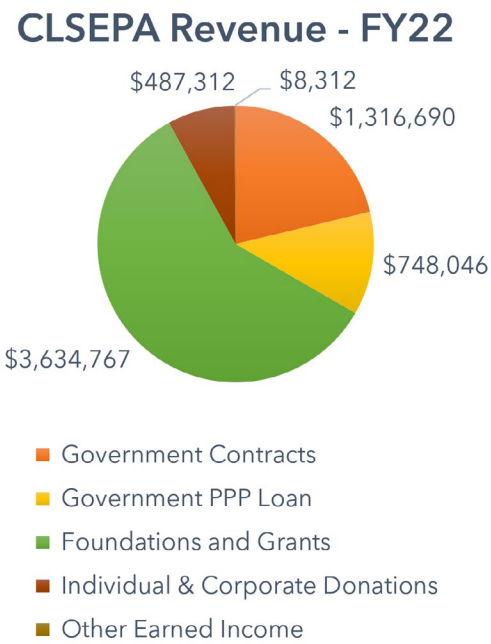
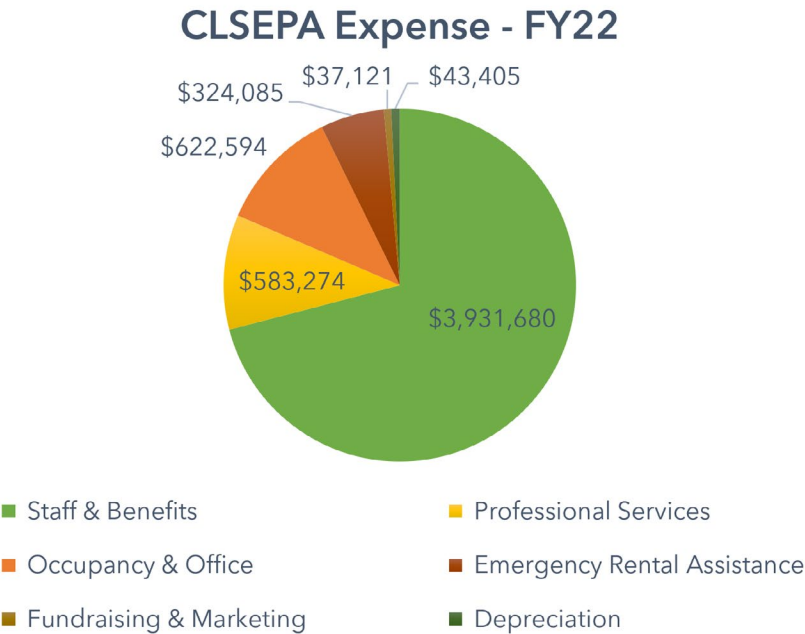
CLSEPA re-filed the dismissals 6 months later and added additional information showing that Brea was still facing the same barriers to economic self-sufficiency from her record. This time, all of her remaining cases were granted. Brea can count on a clear background check and hopes to access better paying jobs by applying for a security guard license which she can access more easily now that her record has been dismissed.

Bonnie's Housing Victory

Bonnie sought CLSEPA's help after she was served an eviction notice. Bonnie is a Section 8 housing choice voucher participant, so the notice threatened both her current home as well as access to future affordable housing since evictions can terminate a person's Section 8 voucher. CLSEPA found that Bonnie's landlord had served her a wrongful eviction for nonpayment of rent and that he actually owed her compensation.

We represented Bonnie in an evidentiary hearing in court to show that not only did she not owe her landlord any rent, but that he actually owed Bonnie thousands of dollars worth of rent credits, adjustments, and rebates for failure to provide critical housing services, including a working heater. Through our representation we were able to preserve Bonnie's Section 8 voucher and obtain a judgment from the court that the landlord owed her approximately \$10,000.

By The Numbers



Pictured: Corina Shortall Enriquez, Psychiatric Social Worker, County of San Mateo. Former client and current CLSEPA board member.

CLSEPA is led by Miguel Molina, Chair of the Board of Directors.

Our board is 69.2% women and 30.8% men. 46% are first-time board members. 54.5% grew up in a bilingual household as children.

We employ a staff of 38 — including 20 attorneys — led by Katrina Logan, Executive Director.

Thanks to our supporters, the attorneys and advocates of CLSEPA are honored to fight for justice and champion social change throughout the year. We are able to stand by our community day after day because of those who stand by us, and we are grateful for your partnership that makes our work possible.



www.clsepa.org

Our mission is to provide transformative legal services that enable diverse communities in East Palo Alto and beyond to achieve a secure and thriving future.

