



Effective. Committed. Accountable.

REPORT 2023 - 2024





Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends,

This year, rather than try to brag on the full scope of the “what” of our work, we tried instead to focus on the “why.” Why should you be proud to support LAJC? In a few words, LAJC is effective, committed, and accountable. Each of those qualities matter as you consider the impact of your giving on people in Virginia.

In the fight against poverty, LAJC gets results. Our attorneys routinely bring about excellent outcomes for our clients that make a material difference in their lives. We keep people housed. We recover stolen wages and help people access public benefits and immigration relief. On the systemic level, we have successfully dismantled self-defeating and discriminatory public policies that we then enforce through our individual wins at the community level. Fewer people live in poverty today because of our work.

We are committed to the long-term fight for racial justice. We understand that there are no quick wins when it comes to dismantling the social, racial, and economic systems that cause poverty. That understanding

informs our approach. We bring people together to demand transformative changes to the systems that extract wealth and limit opportunities, even when those changes take years or decades to achieve.

We are accountable to the communities we serve. Because people like you give unrestricted gifts to LAJC, we are able to put those resources to use in ways that the communities we serve ask us to. That means that our strategies, our tactics, and our priorities are deeply rooted in the lived experiences of people in poverty. You can trust that your support for LAJC will build power for those most directly and deeply impacted by injustice.

So I hope you’ll join me in feeling pride in what we’ve accomplished together and confidence that LAJC will continue to be effective, committed, and accountable in the fight against poverty in Virginia.

Forever in the fight,

Angela Ciolfi,
Executive Director

Effective.

Every year, we **defend thousands of people in and out of court** from eviction, financial exploitation, deportation, denial of affirmative rights to education and public benefits, and more.

This spring, we represented a client who had been treated for a brain mass and septic shock at a major regional hospital. Previously uninsured, her family had helped her apply for Medicaid, and she was relieved to receive a notice saying she was eligible for full coverage to be backdated to before her hospitalization. She had already received a hefty bill for her ambulance ride to the hospital. She waited for her Medicaid ID to arrive in the mail, but it never came.

After 58 days in the hospital, she was discharged into an inpatient rehab facility to assist her in recovering from such a major medical episode. She kept receiving bills even though Medicaid should have covered her stay. At one point, she was told she would be evicted from rehab if her bills weren't paid.

She spoke with an LAJC attorney who, as part of a medical-legal partnership with the hospital system, helps low-income patients navigate the complex medical billing world and protect their rights. Our attorney had seen this situation before. It's an issue known as a "Bridging Error," affecting Medicaid patients across the state where people are approved for Medicaid but, due to an internal communication error, their enrollment never gets put into the system that providers use to submit claims for payment.

We helped the client appeal and demanded a decision be expedited due to her precarious situation at the rehab facility. When that was denied, we ramped up the fight, calling and writing to officials to move them to action. And it worked.

In the end, our client received the full coverage Medicaid she was owed. Her bill, which had now reached over \$480,000, was paid in full. Our team is working now on a systemic solution to this problem so that no more families go into crippling debt over medical bills that the state should have paid.



**In the fight against poverty,
we get results.**



Committed.

*There are no quick wins when it comes to **fighting systemic racism and poverty**.*

Achieving structural change takes time, persistence, sustained resources, and the ability to adapt strategy and tactics to complex and ever-changing circumstances. We fight the long fight wherever the battle takes us.

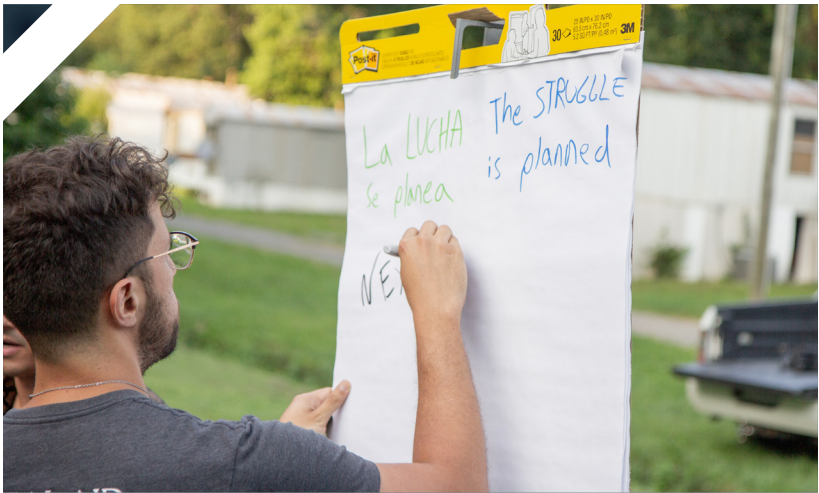
In 2021, we worked with The Expungement Council—a group of directly affected people advocating for better criminal record clearing—and other groups to pass a comprehensive and groundbreaking expansion of Virginia’s record-sealing law. It was an important victory, and the first change to this law in decades, but there was a catch: it doesn’t go into effect until July 1, 2025.

At LAJC, we don’t just pass a law and move on; we help to ensure our communities experience the real benefits of legislative change. For years, we’ve been working behind the scenes to ensure that Virginia state agencies would be ready to implement the law.

We also joined with partners including The Expungement Council, Justice Forward Virginia, New Virginia Majority, and Nolef Turns Inc., to host six expungement clinics in locations across Virginia. In 2024, our team helped dozens of community members apply for record sealing under Virginia’s more restrictive current law, while also informing them about the new opportunities that the upcoming change to the law will bring. More clinics are already scheduled, and we will be working tirelessly to get the word out about the new law throughout the coming year.



**We are committed to the
long-term fight for racial justice.**



Accountable.

*To create lasting, sustainable, and community-driven change, we **build trusting and accountable relationships with communities directly impacted by systemic injustice.***

We support those communities in wielding their own power against the systems that create and perpetuate poverty, and we combine direct services and systemic advocacy in ways that allow us to build long-term change while simultaneously responding to a community's most urgent needs.

This year we continued our long-running efforts to organize and advocate with migrant farmworkers on Virginia's Eastern Shore. As we do every year, our team set up a temporary home base there over the summer, joining our community organizer who lives there year-round, to meet with workers as they arrive to begin the year's harvest.

Our work there takes many forms: from creating meeting spaces for workers to organize and set the agenda for the changes that we help them fight for; to collaborating with the Agricultural Workers Advocacy Coalition (AWAC)—a local advocacy group—to source over 40 air conditioning units to help workers survive the brutal heat wave that hit the area last summer; to sharing information with workers about their rights and the processes available to enforce them; to fighting for workers in court against abusive employers. One recent big win: we finalized a settlement with one of Virginia's largest agricultural employers on behalf of a class of nearly 200 workers for recovery of \$800,000 in unpaid overtime wages!

Building trust with migrant farmworkers, most of whom are almost totally reliant on their employers while they are in the U.S., takes an enormous amount of time and effort. Our years long commitment on the Eastern Shore has brought real support, relief, and change to many, and we continue to fight for fair and humane working conditions and treatment for these essential workers.



**We are accountable to the people
and communities we serve**



SERVED **3,500** PEOPLE FACING LOSS OF HOUSING. • HELPED **900** PEOPLE ACCESS MEDICAID OR OTHER PUBLIC BENEFITS. • WON **\$160,000** FOR MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS WHOSE RENTS WERE ILLEGALLY HIKE. • ENABLED YOUTH IN **26** DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO EDUCATION. • SECURED OVER **\$1.2** MILLION IN PAYMENTS OWED TO OUR CLIENTS. • HELPED OVER **300** FAMILIES NAVIGATE OUR IMMIGRATION SYSTEM. • PROTECTED OVER **\$2.4** MILLION IN ASSETS FOR OUR CLIENTS. • HELPED TO WIN OVER **\$1BILLION** IN K-12 EDUCATION FUNDING ABOVE THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET.

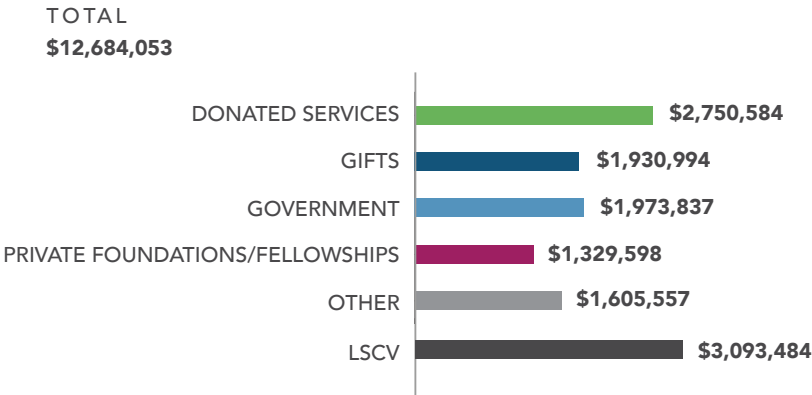


Your support makes our work possible.

Financials.

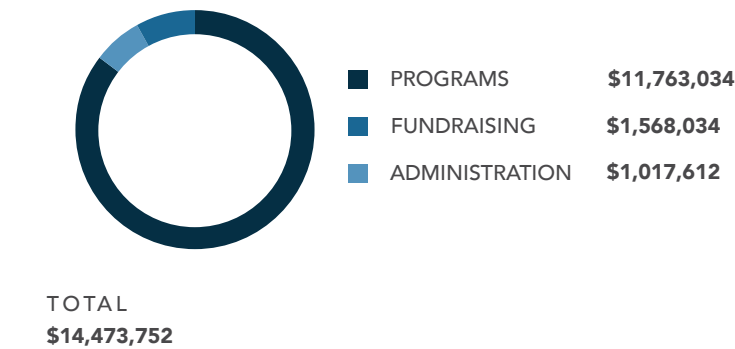
Revenue

FISCAL YEAR 2024



Expenses

FISCAL YEAR 2024



The \$1.8MM gap between expenses and revenue is due to LAJC spending down our “Transformation Fund,” which was created by a generous gift of \$10MM from Sonjia Smith in 2021 with instructions to put the money out into the field in pursuit of justice. We expect to fully deplete the Transformation Fund in FY25.

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