

# FUNDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

# 2019

Annual Report



Connecticut  
Bar Foundation

## Annual Report of President Andrea Barton Reeves and Executive Director Natalie Wagner

We are pleased to present the 2019 Annual Report of the Connecticut Bar Foundation (CBF). **Natalie Wagner** joined the CBF as Executive Director in 2019. The staff soon thereafter welcomed **Sarah Robinson** as the Executive Assistant and Program Coordinator.

For the first time over the last decade, the Foundation saw notable gains in its IOLTA investments. These funds are held for the purpose of stabilizing the **IOLTA grant program** during economic downturns and softening the impact of funding decreases on legal aid organizations when their services are needed most. While still ending at a fraction of their high in 2008, it was a welcome turn from the modest fluctuations that marked the last decade.

135 James W. Cooper Fellows volunteered as judges for the **19th Annual Quintin Johnstone State-wide High School Essay Contest**. 83 entrants from across the state responded to the topic, "Jumping the Gun - Preventing School Violence." A winner and two runners-up were recognized at a ceremony hosted by the State Supreme Court.

Jamey Bell, Executive Director of Greater Hartford Legal Aid, was presented with the inaugural **Anthony M. Fitzgerald Award for Excellence** at the CBF 2019

Annual Reception. The award was established by the partners of Carmody Torrance Sandak and Hennessey LLP to honor Tony Fitzgerald upon his retirement and recognizes the dedicated service and outstanding achievements of a Connecticut nonprofit legal service provider or legal aid attorney.

Attorneys and staff from Greater Hartford Legal Aid established the **David A. Pels Homelessness Prevention Fund** at the CBF upon the retirement of David Pels, a pioneer of landlord-tenant law in Connecticut. The program allows attorneys to apply for grants of up to \$500 on behalf of legal aid clients to prevent an eviction or subsidy termination.

The Foundation's 2019 symposia brought together practitioners across disciplines to explore solutions to crises in our state. The Fellows co-sponsored the **Opioid Summit Part 2** on June 7th with Quinnipiac University and the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA). Over 165 lawyers, medical professionals, municipal leaders, first responders, and others came to report on their collaborations since the inaugural Summit the previous year.

The CBF and Quinnipiac School of Law (QSL) hosted over 200 attendees

for the **11th John A. Speziale Alternative Dispute Resolution Symposium**, "Reimagining Dispute Resolution of Family Matters in Connecticut." The Fellows also hosted nine Roundtable discussions across the state in 2019.

The inaugural class of Singer Fellows completed their first year in 2019. All three were invited back by their host organizations (one as a staff attorney), and two new Fellows started in September. The mission of the **Singer Connecticut Public Service Fellowship Program** is to increase access to justice in Connecticut by supporting the placement of talented new lawyers with legal services organizations in the state.

We thank Patricia Kaplan and Judge James Sicilian for their service on the board and welcome **Namita Shah** and **Victoria "Tory" Chavey** of Jackson Lewis. We recognize with great appreciation QSL, UConn School of Law, Yale Law School, and the CBA for their continuing support of the CBF and its mission. As this is her final report, Andrea wishes to thank the Board members and officers, the Fellows, and the rest of the staff - Liz Drummond, Anne Goico, Sarah Robinson, and Gina Casella - for their continuing dedication to the CBF.

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#### With thanks to recent directors and staff:

Dean Jennifer  
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### Who do you bank with?



The CBF is grateful for the generosity of our Leadership Banks!

The following institutions pay higher interest rates on IOLTA/IOTA accounts to increase access to justice for Connecticut residents who cannot afford an attorney.

Bank of New York Mellon    The First Bank of Greenwich    First Suffield Bank, a Division of PeoplesBank

PNC Bank    New Haven Bank    Signature Bank    Sterling National Bank    Thomaston Savings Bank

Torrington Savings Bank    Washington Trust Company    Westfield Bank

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**2019 Grants** Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts/Interest on Trust Accounts (IOLTA/IOTA), Court Fees Grants-in-Aid (CFGIA), Judicial Branch Grants-in-Aid (JBGIA), Bank of America Settlement Fund Grants (BOA), Singer Fellowship Awards (Singer)

Legal Services Providers	IOLTA/IOTA	CFGIA	JBGIA	BOA	Singer	GRANTS PAID
<b>Center for Children's Advocacy</b> provides legal representation and systemic advocacy for children and youth at risk statewide.	\$ 88,970	\$ 380,076	\$ 41,302	\$ 186,549		\$ 696,897
<b>Children's Law Center of Connecticut</b> provides representation, as Guardians ad litem or Attorneys for the Minor Child, to children of indigent families who are embroiled in bitter custody disputes in Family Courts statewide.	\$ 37,664	\$ 160,904	\$ 17,485			\$ 216,053
<b>Connecticut Fair Housing Center</b> represents those who have been victims of housing discrimination.	\$ 23,181	\$ 98,996	\$ 10,761	\$ 250,000		\$ 382,938
<b>Connecticut Legal Rights Project</b> represents low-income people with mental health conditions to protect their legal rights in the community and in state-operated hospitals.	\$ 110,214	\$ 470,804	\$ 51,165			\$ 632,183
<b>Connecticut Legal Services</b> provides general legal assistance in all areas of the state except Hartford and New Haven Counties.	\$ 1,524,406	\$ 6,512,070	\$ 707,677	\$ 412,027	\$ 18,750	\$ 9,174,930
<b>Connecticut Veterans Legal Center's</b> mission is to lower the legal barriers to housing, healthcare, and income for veterans recovering from mental illness and homelessness.	\$ 22,571	\$ 96,367	\$ 10,478		\$ 75,000	\$ 204,416
<b>Greater Hartford Legal Aid</b> provides general legal assistance in greater Hartford.	\$ 613,557	\$ 2,621,071	\$ 284,832		\$ 71,069	\$ 3,590,529
<b>Lawyers for Children America</b> provides representation to poor and at-risk children in Bridgeport, Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, Rockville, Torrington, and Waterbury Juvenile Courts.	\$ 9,717	\$ 41,481	\$ 4,511			\$ 55,709
<b>New Haven Legal Assistance</b> provides general legal assistance in the Greater New Haven and Lower Naugatuck Valley communities.	\$ 454,275	\$ 1,940,610	\$ 210,889	\$ 419,388	\$ 89,294	\$ 3,114,456
<b>Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut</b> provides legal services to low income people, including advice, brief services, self-help, referrals to legal aid providers, pro bono referral, and community education.	\$ 48,928	\$ 209,026	\$ 22,714			\$ 280,668
<b>Technology Grant for CTLawHelp Website</b>	\$ 121,130					\$ 121,130
<b>Legal Services Funding Total</b>	\$ 3,054,613	\$ 12,531,405	\$ 1,361,814	\$ 1,267,964	\$ 254,113	\$18,469,909

**CBF Law School Scholarships**

The law school scholarship program, which is based on financial need, began in 1989 when the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 89-196 that authorized the administrator of the IOLTA program, the Connecticut Bar Foundation, to provide funding for these scholarships. The CBF developed plans to implement the program and started funding scholarships in 1990. From 1990 to 2019, the CBF has made equal, annual grants totaling \$4,355,969 to Quinnipiac School of Law (formerly the University of Bridgeport School of Law), UConn School of Law, and Yale Law School. The CBF is proud of its role of providing financial assistance to hundreds of law school students and helping them to achieve a legal education and become attorneys.

Connecticut Legal Rights Project has always appreciated the support of the Connecticut Bar Foundation. We provide legal services to low-income people living with mental health conditions in accordance with their expressed preferences. We would not have been able to maintain our services to our clients without the ongoing financial support of the CBF, and especially its flexibility in allowing us to use their funds to address our client's most pressing needs, regardless of whether our clients are living in the community or in institutions.



**Kathy Flaherty**, Executive Director  
Connecticut Legal Rights Project