



2023

Annual Report

FUNDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE



2023 Annual Report of Board President Hon. Victoria Woodin Chavey and Executive Director Angela Schlingheyde

We are pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report of the Connecticut Bar Foundation (CBF). Having adopted a new strategic plan in December 2022, CBF continued its focus on facilitating systemic change that advances civil justice for all. In pursuing that overall goal, CBF's work this year included partnering with legal services providers around the state to ensure legal aid for as many Connecticut residents as possible, as well as offering a variety of impactful programs that contribute to and reflect CBF's mission. CBF also welcomed new leadership: Angela Schlingheyde joined in October 2023 as the new Executive Director, Bruce Hiltunen joined in March 2023 as the new Chief Financial Officer, and Ashleigh Backman joined in January 2023 as the new Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer. These leaders bring a wealth of experience and commitment to the work of CBF, and they all transitioned to their new roles quickly and effectively.

2023 was a strong year for CBF financially. The **IOLTA/IOTA program** interest rates have been rising, which has over time started to produce stronger IOLTA/IOLA revenues. IOLTA revenue saw a significant increase in 2023. The increased revenue from IOLTA, along with the two Judicial Branch grants, has allowed CBF to provide greater support to our grantees, who consistently struggle to meet the legal needs of low-income individuals. In 2023, CBF was able to increase awards to our grantees by 20% for use in the 2024 grant cycle. CBF has long invested surplus IOLTA money in a reserve fund that will allow CBF to support our grantees' funding levels when interest rates inevitably drop. Having a reserve of IOLTA funds, in addition to the Judicial Branch grants, will be critical to ensuring that our grantees can continue their work, even when CBF's income from IOLTA decreases. In 2023, revenues from the IOLTA program represented 17% of the annual grant funding distributed to legal aid organizations.

CBF also continued its work in administering **two important right to counsel programs**, which the General Assembly established in 2021 and which

expanded in 2023. The first right to counsel program is an **Eviction Defense program** providing access to counsel for residential tenants facing eviction, as cities and states across the country try to mitigate the destabilization of communities caused by high volume of evictions. In September 2023, 10 new zip codes were added to the program, increasing the number of individuals eligible to access legal services in their eviction matters. The second right to counsel program **increases access to counsel for low-income survivors of domestic violence seeking to apply for a temporary restraining order**. Both programs have greatly increased the number of low-income individuals who can access legal services. CBF will continue its advocacy to ensure these programs are fully funded by the General Assembly.

An important part of CBF's work is education around civil legal justice topics. In 2023, the James W. Cooper Fellows (Fellows) presented extensive programming supporting this educational aspect of CBF's mission. Some programs were virtual, as they had been since the beginning of the pandemic, and some returned to an in-person format. For example, the Fellows presented a **Symposium on the Law of Hate**, the **fifth Hon. Mark A. Kravitz Symposium** exploring what artificial intelligence means for the legal profession, and a continuing **series on Understanding Human Trafficking**. In addition to these Fellows sponsored programs, CBF continued to partner with the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) to present new webinars in the **Constance Baker Motley Speaker Series on Racial Inequality**. The series included five virtual events in 2023, which remain available for viewing on the CBF website.

Furthering the educational work of the Fellows, the **23rd Annual Quintin Johnstone Statewide High School Essay Contest** had another successful year, with many student submissions and strong participation of the Fellows to read and score the essays. Two students tied as Statewide Winner in 2023: Siddharth Krishnan of University High School of Science and Engineering and Ben Nolan of East Hampton High School.

The runner-up was Danielle Cabassa of The Woodstock Academy. The awards presentation was held at the Connecticut Supreme Court in June 2023.

Meeting the legal services needs of Connecticut residents depends on the continuing addition of dedicated lawyers to work at CBF's grantees. CBF is proud to administer an important program of the **Herbert and Nell Singer Foundation** that addresses this need through the Singer Connecticut Public Service Fellowship. In 2023, Singer Fellowships were awarded to two new lawyers working in public interest law. Attorney Emily Leen received a Fellowship to work at New Haven Legal Aid Assistance and Attorney Mallory James Sanchez received a Fellowship to work at the Center for Children's Advocacy. Additionally, the 2022 Fellowship recipients, Attorney Theresa Dudek at Connecticut Fair Housing Center and Attorney Margaret Rodriguez at Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services, both elected to continue their Fellowships for a second year. We continue to be grateful to the Herbert and Nell Singer Foundation for providing the opportunity to expand the capacity of critical legal aid services in Connecticut.

Finally, we thank outgoing board members Timothy A. Diemand, Margaret Middleton, and Moy Ogilvie, for their years of dedicated service on the CBF Board, and we welcome new board members Hon. Cody Guarnieri and Kristen Jacoby. We recognize Dean Jennifer Brown of Quinnipiac Law for her strong contributions to the Board and wish her well as she ends her deanship and leaves the Board; we also look forward to welcoming to the Board new Quinnipiac Law School Dean Brian Gallini. CBF wishes to acknowledge the continuing support of the CBF and its mission that Quinnipiac University School of Law, UConn School of Law, Yale Law School, and the CBA provide. We especially thank CBF's wonderful staff, along with all Board members and James W. Cooper Fellows, for their ongoing work on behalf of CBF.

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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 America • The Bank of New York Mellon • BankUnited, N.A. • Berkshire Bank
Flagstar Bank, N.A. • JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A. • Key Bank • M&T Bank
NBT Bank • New Haven Bank • Peoples Bank • Santander Bank, N.A. • TD Bank
Thomaston Savings Bank • Torrington Savings Bank • Westfield Bank

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2023 Grants

Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts/Interest on Trust Accounts (IOLTA/IOTA),
Court Fees Grants-in-Aid (CFGIA), Judicial Branch Grants-in-Aid (JBGIA),

Legal Service Providers	IOLTA/IOTA	CFGIA	JBGIA	TOTAL GRANTS PAID
Center for Children's Advocacy provides legal representation and systemic advocacy for children and youth at risk statewide.	\$131,578	\$422,963	\$70,408	\$624,949
Children's Law Center of Connecticut 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.	\$52,368	\$168,308	\$28,018	\$248,694
Connecticut Fair Housing Center represents those who have been victims of housing discrimination.	\$33,285	\$106,952	\$17,806	\$158,043
Connecticut Legal Rights Project represents low-income people with mental health conditions to protect their legal rights in the community and in state-operated hospitals.	\$140,854	\$452,797	\$75,374	\$669,025
Connecticut Legal Services provides general legal assistance in all areas of the state except Hartford and New Haven Counties.	\$1,719,885	\$5,528,934	\$920,344	\$8,169,163
Connecticut Veterans Legal Center's mission is to lower the legal barriers to housing, healthcare, and income for veterans recovering from mental illness and homelessness.	\$40,150	\$129,131	\$21,498	\$190,779
Greater Hartford Legal Aid provides general legal assistance in greater Hartford.	\$780,091	\$2,507,728	\$417,446	\$3,705,265
Lawyers for Children America provides representation to poor and at-risk children in Bridgeport, Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, Rockville, Torrington, and Waterbury Juvenile Courts.	\$12,205	\$39,178	\$6,522	\$57,905
New Haven Legal Assistance provides general legal assistance in the Greater New Haven and Lower Naugatuck Valley communities.	\$523,757	\$1,683,751	\$280,282	\$2,487,790
Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut provides legal services to low-income people, including advice, brief services, self-help, referrals to legal aid providers, pro bono referrals, and community education.	\$45,713	\$146,917	\$24,460	\$217,090
Open Communities Alliance provides legal assistance to low-income families facing discriminatory barriers when trying to access affordable housing in resource-rich communities.	\$22,190	\$71,377	\$11,882	\$105,449
Technology Grant for CTLawHelp Website	\$128,318			\$128,318
Legal Services Funding Total	\$3,630,394	\$11,258,036	\$1,874,040	\$16,762,470

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 2023, the CBF has made equal, annual grants totaling \$4,505,909 to Quinnipiac University 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.



Alexis Smith
Executive Director
New Haven Legal Assistance Association

We are grateful to be a grantee of the Connecticut Bar Foundation. 2024 is a special year for us as we are celebrating 60 years of working side by side with our community to offer free, high quality legal services to people living in poverty in New Haven County and the lower Naugatuck Valley. We strive to provide equal access to the justice system, enhance the rights and living conditions of our client community, and help our client community protect their own rights. We are committed to do the work to balance the individual clients who need our help with the impact litigation and organizing work that is part of the fight to dismantle structures of oppression.