



**VOLUNTEER
LAWYERS
PROJECT**

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

**POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS,
INSPIRED BY LEADERSHIP**

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POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS,
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Introduction

Letter from Joanna Allison, Executive Director

To all of you,

Each year as Executive Director I have expressed my gratitude for your work as VLP Board, VLP Staff, and volunteers and have asked you to stay committed to our clients and our mission. This year, I do the same with a bittersweet goodbye as I leave VLP in your capable hands and ride off in search of the North Carolina sunset.

WE have faced many challenges during my time at VLP as a staff attorney and as Executive Director from threatened funding cuts to a global pandemic, to several economic recessions and more, all of which harm the communities we serve the most. You who are here, and those who have passed through our doors have risen to those challenges, faced the hard times, and continued to work hard for our clients and our cause. And now, in these times of incomprehensible ill will toward the people we serve, I leave my position here grateful, humbled, and awed that you still support and hold high regard for our work and our clients.

It has been my mantra, in the words of James Baldwin, that “Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed that is not faced”. Please do not lose the confidence to wish for more.

Yours,
Joanna Allison

Joanna Allison



Client Demographics

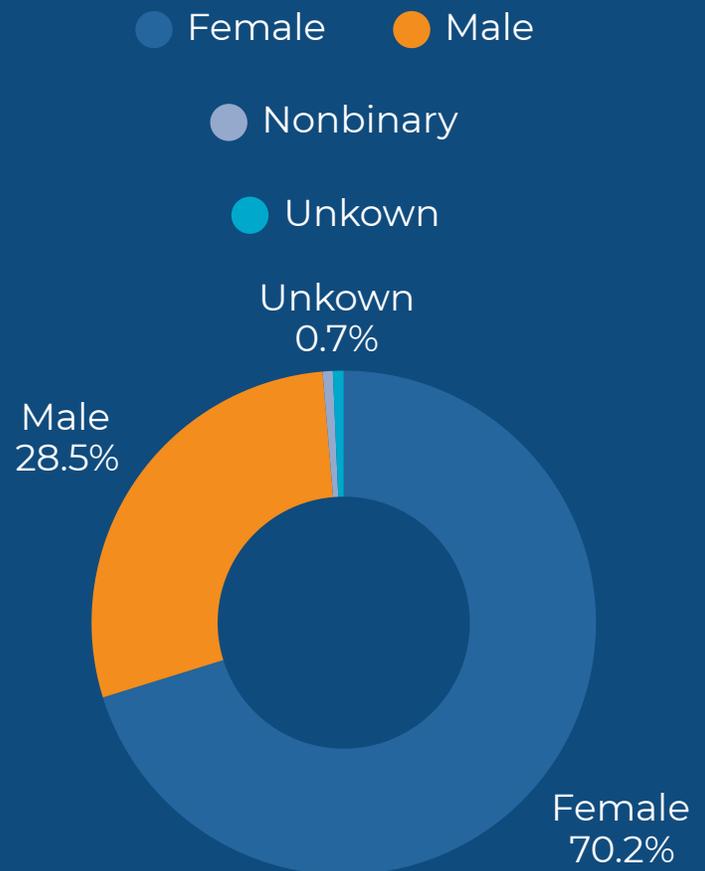
34+ Languages and Dialects

1,442 Domestic Violence Survivors Assisted

1,077 Disabled Clients Assisted

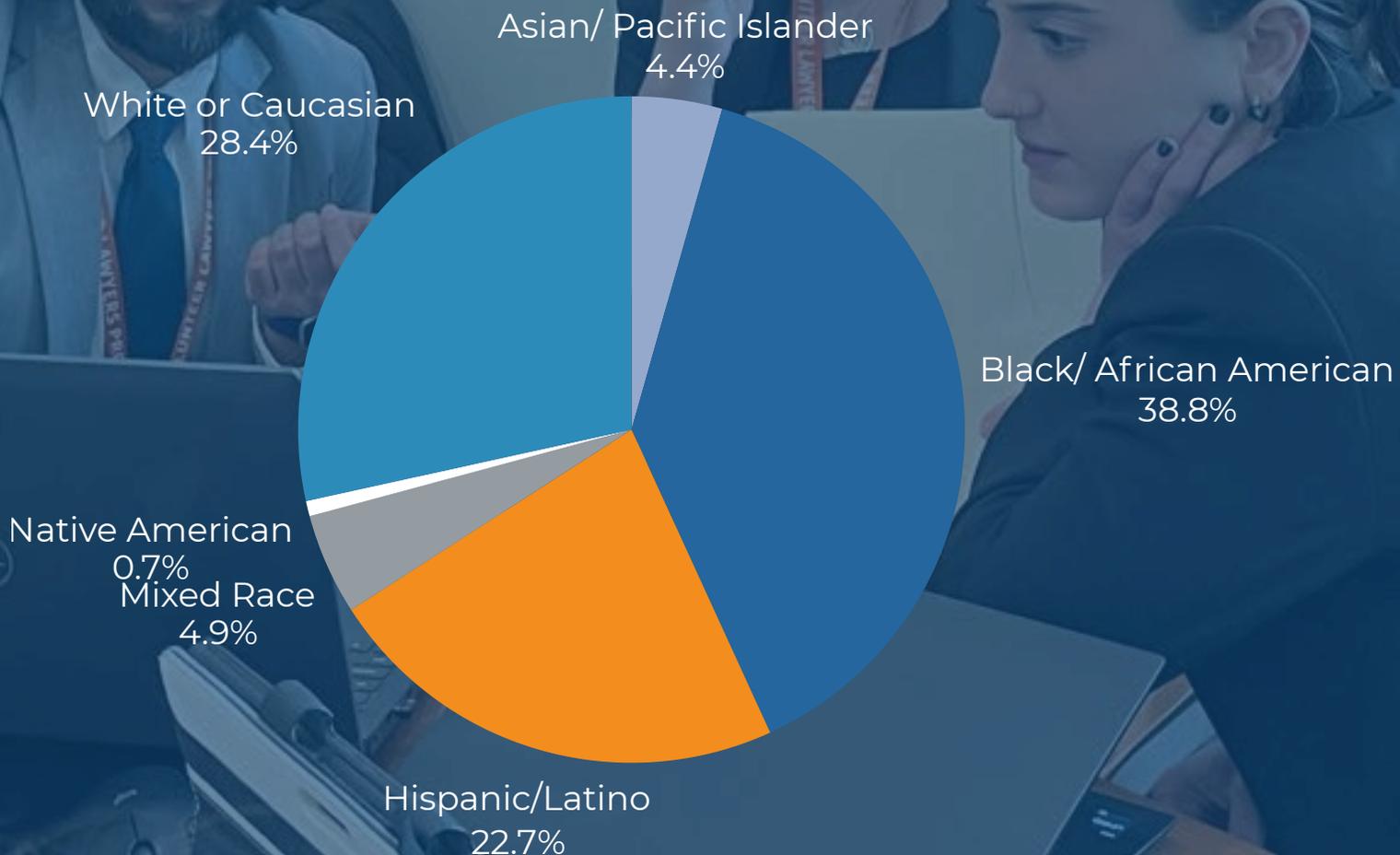
57- Average Client Age

108 Veterans Assisted



Client Demographics

- Asian/ Pacific Islander
- Black/ African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Mixed Race
- Native American
- White or Caucasian

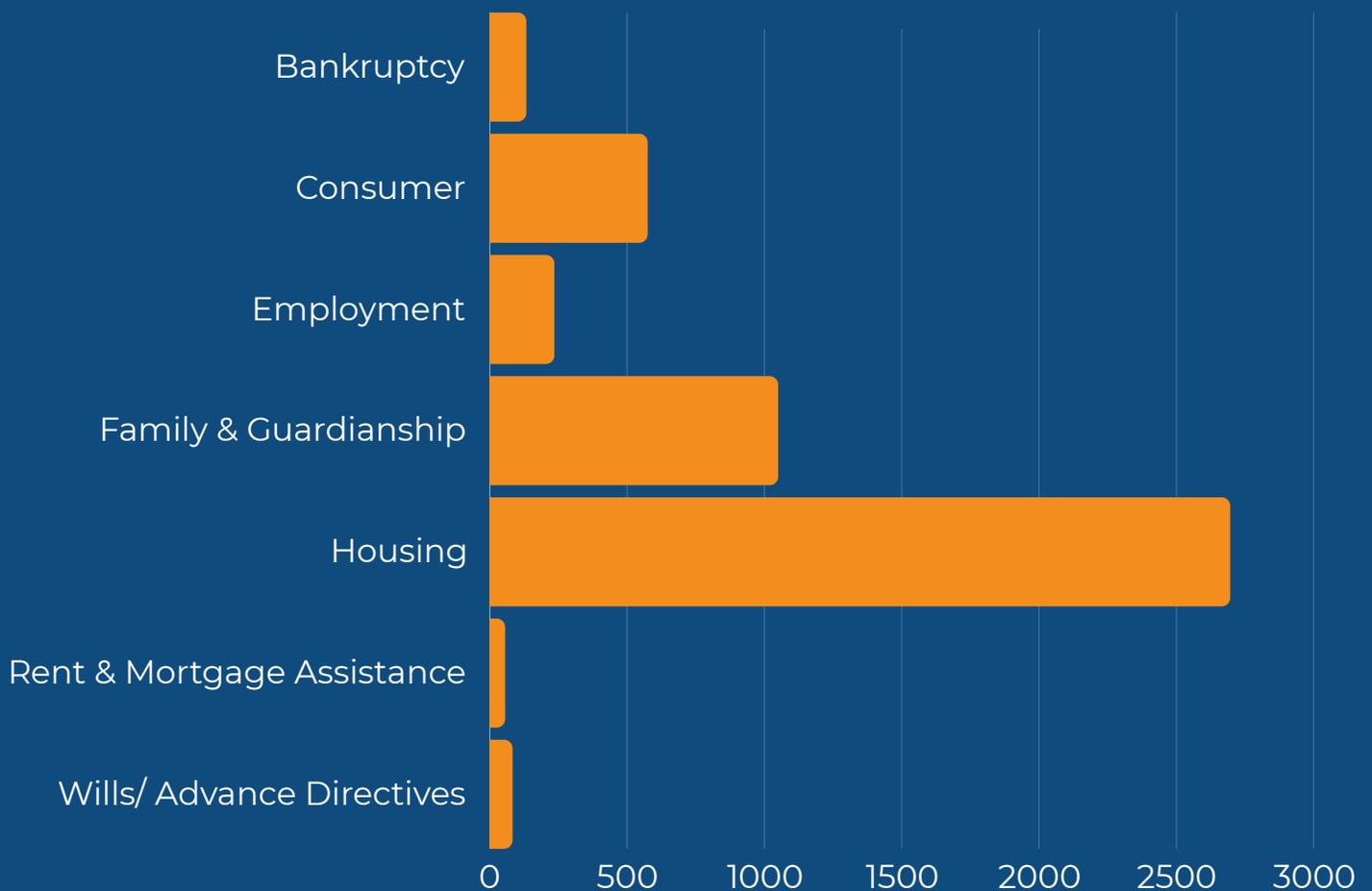


Community Impact



14,658 people assisted
10,468 people received info
& referral
4,190 people received legal
services
13,347 service requests
fielded by ERLI

Case Breakdown



Bankruptcy- 133

Consumer- 575

Employment- 235

Family/ Guardianship- 1,050

Housing- 2,696

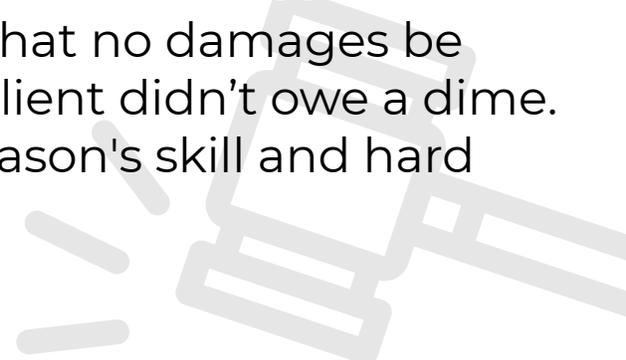
Rent & Mortgage Assistance- 56

Wills/ Advance Directives- 83

Success Stories

Appeals

Pro Bono Attorney Ernie Sarason, a retired judge, wins case in the District Court Appellate Division. The case began a decade ago, when a contractor claimed our client owed him more than \$20,000 for a \$7,500 deck job that he never finished. The contractor sued for payment and, despite presenting no evidence of damages, the judge awarded him more than \$20,000 in damages against the client. The case went back and forth with the judge many times without a favorable resolution, until Attorney Sarason picked up the case in October 2022. For two years, Ernie dedicated over 80 hours to this case, advocating for his client and ensuring her voice was heard. With the invaluable assistance of Attorney Dick Bauer, Attorney Sarason argued that the hearings should have included evidence of the contractor's actual damages done by the contractor, which had not been presented in any of the hearings. On September 30, 2024, the District Court Appellate Division reversed the amount of the judgment and ordered that no damages be awarded to the contractor and Ernie's client didn't owe a dime. This case is a testament to Attorney Sarason's skill and hard work; Congratulations, Ernie!



Success Stories

Bankruptcy

VLP Pro Bono Attorney Maegan Hurley recalls a case she worked on regarding a client who had to relocate from her home country to Massachusetts after a natural disaster struck her town, preventing her from receiving the medical treatment she needed. Leaving almost all her belongings behind, she came to Massachusetts to temporarily stay with family as she sorted out her medical needs. Soon after her move, she began receiving



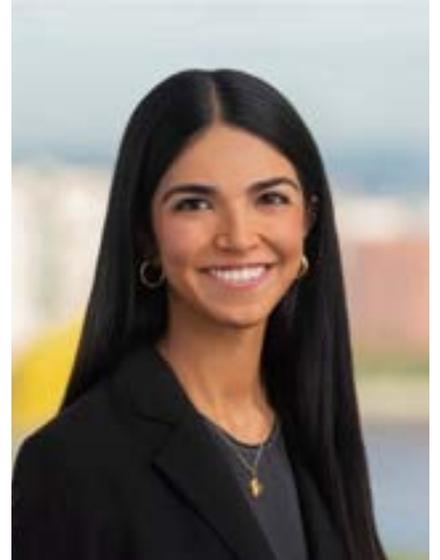
threatening calls and letters from creditors. Already dealing with the anxieties of adjusting to a new country, this client came to VLP fearful and in need of urgent legal assistance. VLP paired her with Attorney Hurley who dedicated time to advocating for this client. Maegan filed a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy for her and was able to get the bankruptcy case discharged of over **\$23,000** in debt. Maegan shares: “When I met her at the courthouse for her bankruptcy meeting, she was trembling she was so nervous, but once the meeting was over, she held my hand and said how she can finally move on fresh and without fear. At her invitation I later visited her at her brand-new apartment, where she proudly showed me how she was slowly beginning to acquire furniture and make it a home’. This story is a true testament to what a difference a helping hand can make. Thank you for your dedication to our clients, Maegan!



Success Stories

Housing

In 2024, an 87-year-old woman came to VLP seeking assistance with an eviction case. This client had been renting a unit from a dear friend and philanthropist who only charged her a few dollars per month. Unfortunately, upon the passing of this friend, she was served eviction papers from the personal representative of her now-deceased landlord's estate, arguing that she owed thousands of dollars and never signed a lease even though she did sign a lease that is valid until mid-2025. Stressed and on the verge



of displacement, VLP was able to pair her with Pro Bono Attorney Zohra Yaqhubi, who argued that the case should be dismissed since the Plaintiff identified the wrong person in both the Notice to Quit and Summons and Complaint. The judge agreed and dismissed the case, allowing this client to move on and live stress free of a potential eviction. Attorney Yaqhubi shared: "This case was a textbook lesson in the consequences of unequal access to legal representation. Despite my client having a valid lease under which she was occupying her residence, the opposing party had the financial means to hire a full team of incredulous lawyers who refused to accept that she could rightfully live in the North End at the nominal rent she was paying. As a result, they sought to weaponize the complexity of housing court and the threat of eviction to their advantage. Luckily, VLP was able to connect me with my client just before a critical court date. That partnership gave us the chance to level the playing field, secure her housing and restore her peace of mind. Our justice system rests on the promise that rich and poor alike are treated equally. While reality often falls short of that ideal, VLP's work helps tip the scales back towards fairness. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the organization and be part of that work." Thank you, Zohra, for your contribution to VLP!

Financial Outcomes



\$2,627,022.43
Bankruptcy &
Consumer Debt
discharged



\$ 1,189,826.85
Rent arrears
waived/
collected



\$7,211.97
Lost Wages
Recovered



\$149,706
Child/ Spousal
Support awarded/
ordered



\$76,643.17
Rental Mortgage
Assistance
Obtained



\$256,314.76
Unemployment
benefits awarded/
preserved

Volunteer Impact



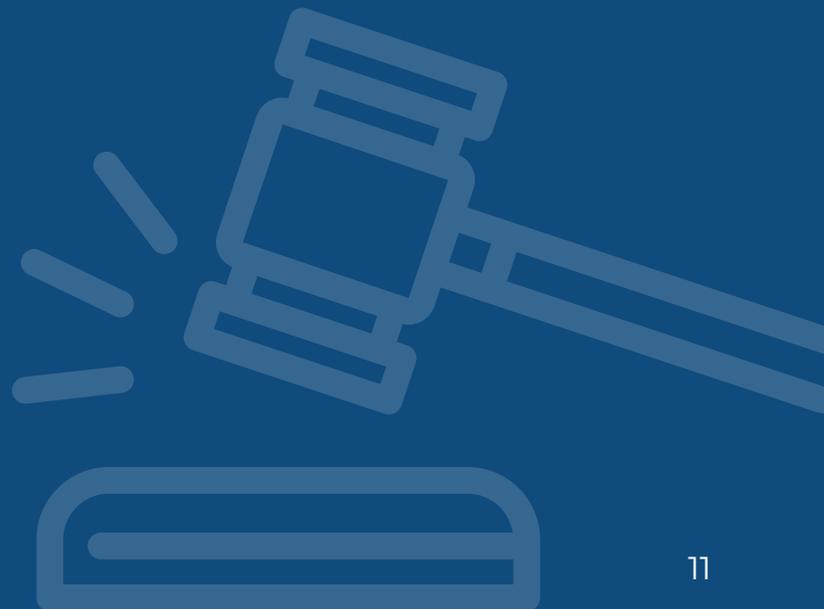
14,921 Pro Bono Hours
1,384 Case Volunteers
423 Clinic Volunteers
1,265 Cases with Pro Bono Participation

Financials

Revenue & Expenses for the Years Ended
December 31, 2023 & 2024

2023

Total Revenue	Amount	% of Total
Grants & Contracts	5,048,755	94%
Contributions	172,622	3%
Other Income	172,516	3%
Total Expenses	Amount	% of Total
Program	4,736,138	91%
Management	388,661	8%
Fundraising	57, 819	1%



Financials

Revenue & Expenses for the Years Ended
December 31, 2023 & 2024

2024

Total Revenue	Amount	% of Total
Grants & Contracts	4,033,839	87%
Contributions	332,619	7%
Other Income	260,833	6%
Total Expenses	Amount	% of Total
Program	3,662,469	89%
Management	400,700	10%
Fundraising	60,018	1%

Every dollar contributed helps our clients stay in their homes, recover from debt, and get a fresh start.

Support our mission and help expand access to justice.

➔ Donate or volunteer at vlpnet.org

Judge Edward M. Ginsubrg Gideon's Trumpet Awardees



HON. ERNEST L. SARASON RET.
2023 Awardee



PATRICK DALY, ESQ.
2024 Awardee

Denis Maguire Awardees



MAEGAN HURLEY, ESQ.
2024 Awardee



JULIUS HALSTEAD, ESQ.
2024 Awardee



MORGAN BROWN, ESQ..
2023 Awardee



DAVID FERRERA, ESQ.
2023 Awardee



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2023

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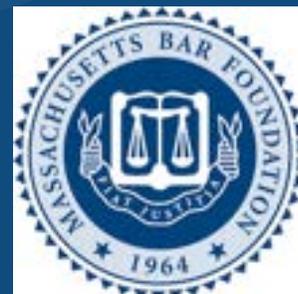
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Frank W. and
Carl S. Adams
Memorial Fund



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mission of creating access to
justice!

-The VLP Team

