



CHARLESTON LEGAL ACCESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Carolina's first nonprofit sliding scale law firm preserves over \$1 million for the working poor

Charleston Legal Access keeps clients out of poverty through affordable, high quality legal services

August 28, 2018

Charleston, SC—The Lowcountry of South Carolina is seeing returns from the state's first nonprofit, sliding scale law firm, Charleston Legal Access (CLA). Since opening its doors in February 2016, the organization has provided legal services to 321 families, microenterprises and individuals, and today is announcing that it has preserved \$1,014,478 that these clients may have lost without legal representation. About half of this amount is money CLA has recovered for its clients, about one quarter are claims that CLA has successfully defended for clients, and about one quarter is debt released as a result of CLA's representation.

"This is a significant milestone for CLA and for the community we serve," said Adair Boroughs, Executive Director of CLA, "By representing South Carolinians at critical moments in their lives, we are preserving substantial assets for families and microenterprises and preventing them from falling into poverty." CLA's success to date shows a demand for high-quality, affordable legal representation to help low and modest-income individuals achieve self-sufficiency and prosper.

The million-dollar milestone also points to CLA's cost effective model: for every dollar spent by the nonprofit law firm, it has been able to preserve \$4 for its clients.

The nonprofit law firm—which is funded in part through philanthropy and in part through client fees—handles most civil matters, including landlord/tenant, property, employment, contracts, victim's rights, and consumer cases. Notable victories include preserving of the home of an elderly blind woman on the brink of foreclosure, recovering damages for a young couple with a newborn whose landlord refused to repair the air conditioner at the height of summer, obtaining an order of protection for a victim of domestic violence, recovering the cost of a lemon generator for a small food truck business, and obtaining guardianship for an adult son whose mother had dementia.

CLA is unique from other nonprofit legal service providers in that it does not focus on free services. Instead, the organization is serving those in the middle—clients whose limited incomes disqualify them from free legal services but who cannot afford private attorney rates. "We are intentionally focused on bridging a clear gap in the justice system," offered Sally Newman, CLA Founder and Legal Director.

CLA provides advice and counsel over the phone for free; in-depth, in-person consultations for a flat fee of \$50; and full representation on a sliding scale. CLA's hourly rates for attorneys are \$50-\$100 per hour depending on household size and income.



CHARLESTON LEGAL ACCESS

Currently, CLA serves clients in the Tri-county area (Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley Counties) but hopes to expand to other parts of the state in future years. Potential clients can have their case or matter evaluated for free by calling CLA's office at 843-640-5980.

#

About Charleston Legal Access

Charleston Legal Access (CLA) is a nonprofit law firm dedicated to expanding access to legal services and rights in South Carolina. CLA serves moderate- and low-income individuals, providing legal representation at reduced fees calculated on a sliding scale and engages in projects to expand access to justice in South Carolina. For more information, please visit:

www.charlestonlegalaccess.org

Media Contact:

Adair Boroughs

Executive Director

Charleston Legal Access

adair@charlestonlegalaccess.org

843-608-0498