

PURSUING JUSTICE

Improving Lives

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Mid Penn
LEGAL SERVICES



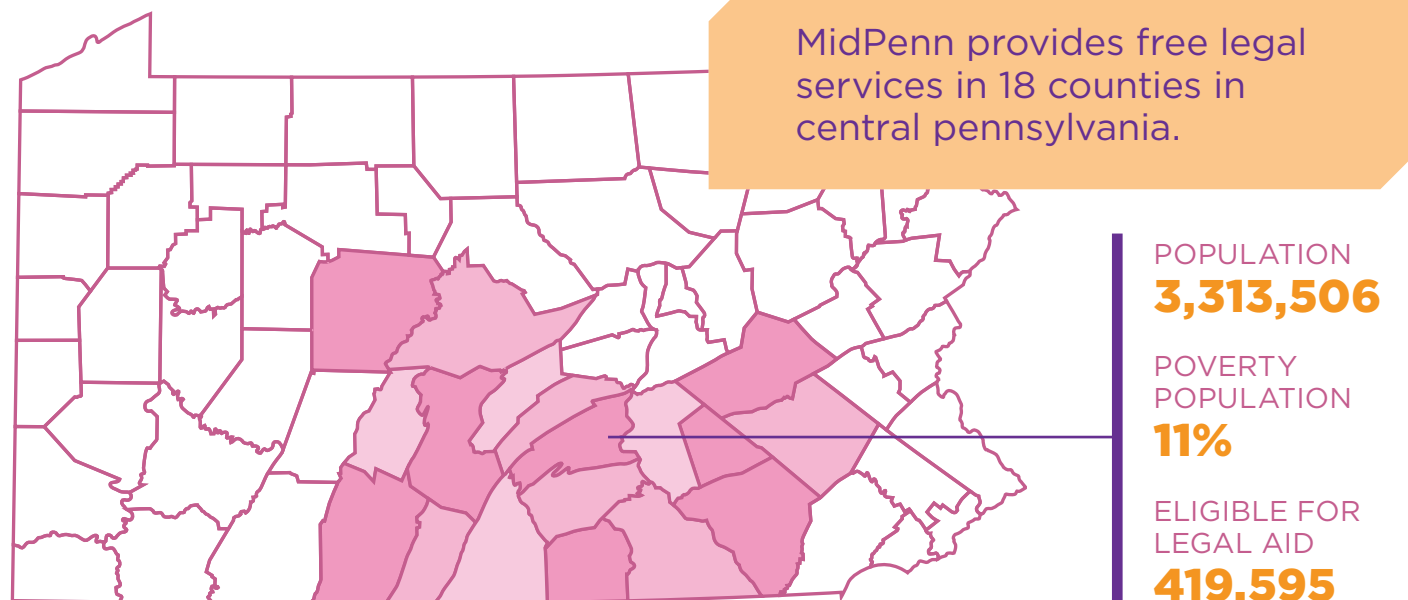


MidPenn
LEGAL SERVICES

ABOUT

Founded in 1969, MidPenn Legal Services is a nonprofit, public interest law firm with staff of 95, including, attorneys, paralegals, support staff and administrators. Since our beginning, we have provided free legal advice and representation to nearly one million low-income individuals, families and survivors of violence. We work to improve the lives of our clients through the provision of high quality impactful legal services.

FOOD ON THE TABLE | STABLE HOME ENVIRONMENT | AN INCOME SOURCE | ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE | PERSONAL SAFETY



**LANCASTER BLAIR CENTRE FULTON BERKS
SCHUYLKILL PERRY CUMBERLAND JUNIATA
MIFFLIN HUNTINGDON DAUPHIN CLEARFIELD
BEDFORD FRANKLIN ADAMS YORK LEBANON**

MISSION

MidPenn Legal Services is a non-profit, public interest law firm that provides high quality free civil legal services to low-income residents and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in 18 counties in Central Pennsylvania.

Despite all that we do, the numbers of low-income individuals and families who need our help, continues to grow.



Greetings,

As 2022 quickly winds to a close, I am reminded that as the year began, we were still trying to effectively navigate the fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to have a disproportionate effect on low-income families who experience civil legal problems. Individuals like Jennie, who suffered horrible, physical and mental abuse at the hands of her partner. However, with the assistance of a MidPenn attorney, Jennie found the courage to go to court and confront her abuser where she received a final Protection Order. At the conclusion of her case, Jennie wrote, "My attorney was an amazing person ... because of her help, I am safe today, and moving forward with my life."

However, despite all that we do, the numbers of low-income individuals and families who need our help, continues to grow. This fact was highlighted in April when the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) released its Justice Gap Report. The Report found that "Low-Income Americans do not get any or enough legal help for 92% of their substantial civil legal problems." The study further found that civil legal problems were present in 3 out of 4 low-income households and that 1 in 2 low-income Americans had personally experienced a legal problem that substantially impacted their lives - with the consequences affecting their finances, mental and physical health, safety, and relationships.

Each day, our advocates work to assist individuals like Jennie who need legal help to gain access to income and health benefits, maintain their housing and remain safe. As you read this Report, you will find stories describing the work we did on behalf of others like Jennie, who needed help to resolve their critical civil legal problems. We were there for them, and together with your assistance, we will continue to be the first responders to those who need our help.

Finally, as we begin to close the book on another year, I would like to take this time to thank each and every one of you who supported the work we do, that has allowed us to serve so many individuals and families across our region during these challenging times.

In deepest gratitude,

Rhodia D. Thomas, Esquire
Executive Director

For more than 50 years, this is the work that MidPenn attorneys, advocates and staff have done on behalf of those living in poverty.



Welcome and Greetings all:

In 1974, when Congress created the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), the following was written, "Without the services of a lawyer, low-income people with civil legal problems may have no practical way of protecting their rights and advancing their interests." Today, almost fifty years later, the LSC Justice Gap Report found that the numbers of individuals and families needing legal help when facing life altering legal situations involving their health, housing, income, safety and overall family stability continues to grow.

While, our civil justice system is designed to afford relief to those seeking resolution in matters that affect their rights, their businesses, and the most intimate aspects of their lives, lack of access to legal representation because of the inability to afford a lawyer, prevents many low-income Americans from obtaining resolution in matters that negatively impact lives. You may not think of the work of civil legal aid attorneys as essential, however, it is for those facing critical legal problems, that often impact their survival. Without legal aid. . .

- Where will survivors of violence in need of civil legal protection turn for help?
- Where will Seniors denied life sustaining health benefits turn for help?

- Where will those denied needed benefits including Unemployment Compensation turn for help to obtain the income they need to support their families?
- Where will an individual or family lay their head at night, if they lose their housing through eviction or mortgage foreclosure? And
- Where will Veterans who have dutifully served our nation, get assistance when faced with loss of income or other housing?

For more than 50 years, this has been the work that MidPenn attorneys, advocates and staff have done on behalf of those living in poverty. Matters that include preserving housing, protecting survivors of domestic violence and obtaining needed income and life sustaining benefits. And with your continued support, we can continue to address the growing legal needs of low-income individuals across our service area.

So, on behalf of the MidPenn Legal Services' Board of Directors, I write to thank all of the individuals, law firms, corporations and foundations who have contributed time and financial support to MidPenn in the past year.

Michael J. Pykosh, Esquire
President
Board of Directors

Board of Directors

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HELPING A LOW-INCOME CLIENT TAKES MORE THAN LEGAL REPRESENTATION. IT TAKES A HOLISTIC APPROACH. IT TAKES A COMMUNITY. I AM MOST PROUD OF HOW OUR EVICTION PREVENTION PROJECT HAS ENGAGED A COMMUNITY TO MEET A COMMUNITY NEED.

**DONALD J. SMITH, JR. , ESQUIRE,
FORMER MIDPENN BOARD CHAIR**





Domestic Violence

Jennie’s husband had become physically abusive and was threatening to kill her after a verbal argument. Jennie had asked her husband to leave the residence several times and he would refuse each time. The last time he refused to leave, Jennie attempted to leave however, her husband hid her car keys from her. Things escalated as the day progressed, and her husband continued to verbally accost her, then began physically beating her. Her husband grabbed her, called her horrible names, slapped her face, grabbed her by the arms and pinched her thigh as hard as he could causing deep pain. The police were called to their home and her husband was forced to leave. Jennie was able to receive an emergency Protection from Abuse (PFA) Order from the Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) and a court hearing was scheduled in the Court of Common Pleas. When MidPenn’s attorney was able to gain Jennie the needed Protection From Abuse Order, she wrote a comment: “My attorney was an amazing person, she was always available when I needed her and always answered any questions I had. She helped me to see I could do what needed to be done and she gave me the encouragement to do it. Because of her help, I am safe today and moving forward with my life. Thank you.”



Unemployment Compensation

Bill needed legal assistance in his Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits case. Bill had received a notice in April of 2020 that he was financially eligible to receive Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits. In March of 2021, he reached out to MidPenn because he had not been receiving any benefits that he was qualified to receive. Our MidPenn Attorney made an inquiry to the Department of Labor and Industry and learned that Bill should have been granted Unemployment Compensation benefits instead of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. MidPenn’s advocate was able to shift Bill’s claim with the Department of Labor and Industry to the Unemployment Compensation and he was able to receive his benefits as well as the additional \$600/week. Bill is also receiving over \$20,000 in back benefits due to the error made by Labor and Industry.



ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN CIVIL COURT MATTERS ARE AT THE VERY HEART OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

**SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE
CAROLYN H. NICHOLS**



2021-2022 Online Giving Campaigns

Pursuing Justice - Improving Lives

June 23 & 24, 2022

Centre Gives

May 10-11, 2022

Give Local York

May 7, 2022

Giving Tuesday

November 30, 2021

Extraordinary Give

Nov. 19, 2021

Palmyra’s Great Give

September 20, 2021

Mortgage Foreclosure

Annie and her husband had obtained a mortgage to purchase a new home. Unfortunately, due to several incidents of domestic violence, Annie divorced her husband and he moved out of the home and refused to help her with the mortgage payments. Annie contacted MidPenn for assistance after she received an Act 91 Notice when she fell three months behind on her mortgage. She immediately applied for a loan modification for the mortgage, however her ex-husband refused to provide her with the information she needed to complete the paperwork. She believed if she could qualify for a modification, she could get caught up and could afford to pay the mortgage herself. Our attorney contacted Annie's ex-husband and was able to gain his cooperation and our advocate then drafted an agreement that would allow him to sign over his interest in the property to her, which allowed her to refinance the mortgage. In addition, our attorney contacted the lender to inquire about what information Annie would need to refinance. She gathered the necessary information and applied to refinance her mortgage. Her application was approved, and she was able to pay the arrears on the mortgage. Annie was able to save her home for herself and her children.



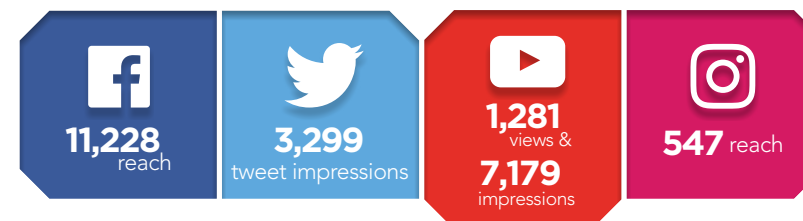
Consumer



Robin is a 67-year-old woman who is permanently disabled due to terminal Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension, and she also has breast cancer. Robin contacted MidPenn because she was being sued by credit card company in Court for \$40,061.92 in delinquent credit card charges. In the past, Robin had been the victim of repeated instances of identity theft. While she reported the theft to the credit card company, they, without explanation, determined the \$40,061.92 that was charged to her credit card account through a sophisticated fraud scheme was not fraud. Robin is not technologically sophisticated, and she was unaware that someone had set up an online account for her credit card without her knowledge. Despite her card having a low balance, the individual committing the fraud kept charging items to her card and then would make payments on the balance with checks that would be returned for insufficient funds. This process was repeated until her card reached the \$40,000 credit limit.

After our attorney reviewed Robin's credit card statements, it became clear what had happened. Our attorney filed Preliminary Objections because the credit card company failed to attach a proper card member agreement to their Complaint. After receiving our attorney's Answer, the credit card company's attorney contacted our attorney and asked that he fill out a Fraud Affidavit on her behalf. In the Fraud Affidavit, our attorney wrote a detailed letter explaining how the fraud happened, in addition to making them aware of Robin's dire health conditions. As a result of our attorney's advocacy, the credit company reversed their original decision in finding there was no fraud and agreed to dismiss the case against Robin which resolved all of her outstanding legal issues regarding the outstanding debt.

2021-2022 Social Media Reach





Housing

Michael is a senior citizen and a veteran. He contacted MidPenn through the “*Help is on the Line Project*” after his electric had been terminated. He had been having trouble paying his bills and had owed over \$1,000 in back payments. His primary source of heat is electric. Over the winter his electric bills were sometimes over \$1,000. This was due to poor insulation and drafty windows. Overwhelmed financially, he also got behind in his rent. Fortunately, he had not yet received an eviction notice.

The *Help is on the Line* attorney was able to connect Michael with various resources that could help him get caught up and help get him back some financial stability. In particular, Michael received assistance from the electric company’s Customer Assistance Program which helps customers keep their electric service through income payment plans. The attorney also provided information on the Supportive Services for Veterans Program which could help him pay the back rent and utility bills as well as the Emergency Rental Assistance Program and the WARM program. Customers participating in WARM receive an in-home energy usage evaluation and energy-savings plan, and have the opportunity to obtain energy-saving home improvements. Michael has been able to resolve the issues thanks to resourceful information obtained from MidPenn.



With your support, we can continue to provide access to high quality legal representation for low-income individuals and families in our service area.

Scan the QR code to donate online.



“WE WITNESS AND FIGHT AGAINST THE INTERSECTIONAL SYMPTOMS OF SYSTEMIC RACISM EVERY DAY. WE HOLD THE COLLECTIVE POWER TO BRING ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY IN AMERICA.” SAYS RHODIA THOMAS, CHAIR OF THE NLADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MIDPENN LEGAL SERVICES.

2021-2022 Online Webinars

Landlords, Tenants & Fair Housing
Valerie West & Nick Matash (October 28)

Impact of Criminal Records
Nick Matash (September 1)

2021 Child Tax Credit
Bob Hamilton (July 12)



Congratulations

Congratulations to retired MidPenn Staff John Mitton, Esq. and Carolyn Sexton. At the York County (PA) Bar Association/York County Bar Foundation’s Annual Recognition Dinner in June of this year, John was presented with the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) Civil Legal Aid Attorney of the Year Award and Carolyn was presented with the PBA Pro Bono Partner Award for their distinguished careers and dedication to the provision of legal services.

“ THE WORK WE DO HAS MANY, MANY DAILY CHALLENGES. I APPRECIATE THE SHARED ATTITUDE OF SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO SURMOUNT BARRIERS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT OUR SHARED GOALS AND OUR SHARED CLIENTS. ”

KAY PICKERING

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

On September 22, 2021, MidPenn held its inaugural “Access to Justice” event to recognize local law firms, volunteer attorneys and non-attorney volunteers who work to support MidPenn’s mission of providing high quality legal representation on behalf of low-income individuals. The Honorable Superior Court Judge, Carolyn H. Nichols gave a keynote address in which she stated, “ We all know that change is needed and state courts cannot simply rely on the same old comfortable methods of the past to make justice a reality for the thousands and thousands civil litigants.” Judge Nichols remarks were followed by the awards ceremony in which former MidPenn Board Chair, Donald. F. Smith, Jr., from Berks County received the Volunteer Attorney of the Year award for the extraordinary work he has done in Berks County to assist low-income residents to resolve their landlord/tenant matters. This was followed by the Law Firm awarded, which was given to the law firm of McNeese Wallace & Nurick for their many years of pro bono advocacy and financial support of MidPenn and its mission. Finally, Kay Pickering of the Harrisburg Peace and Justice Center was awarded the non-attorney Volunteer Award in honor of her many years of working collaboratively with MidPenn advocates to assist low-income residents with housing problems in Dauphin County.

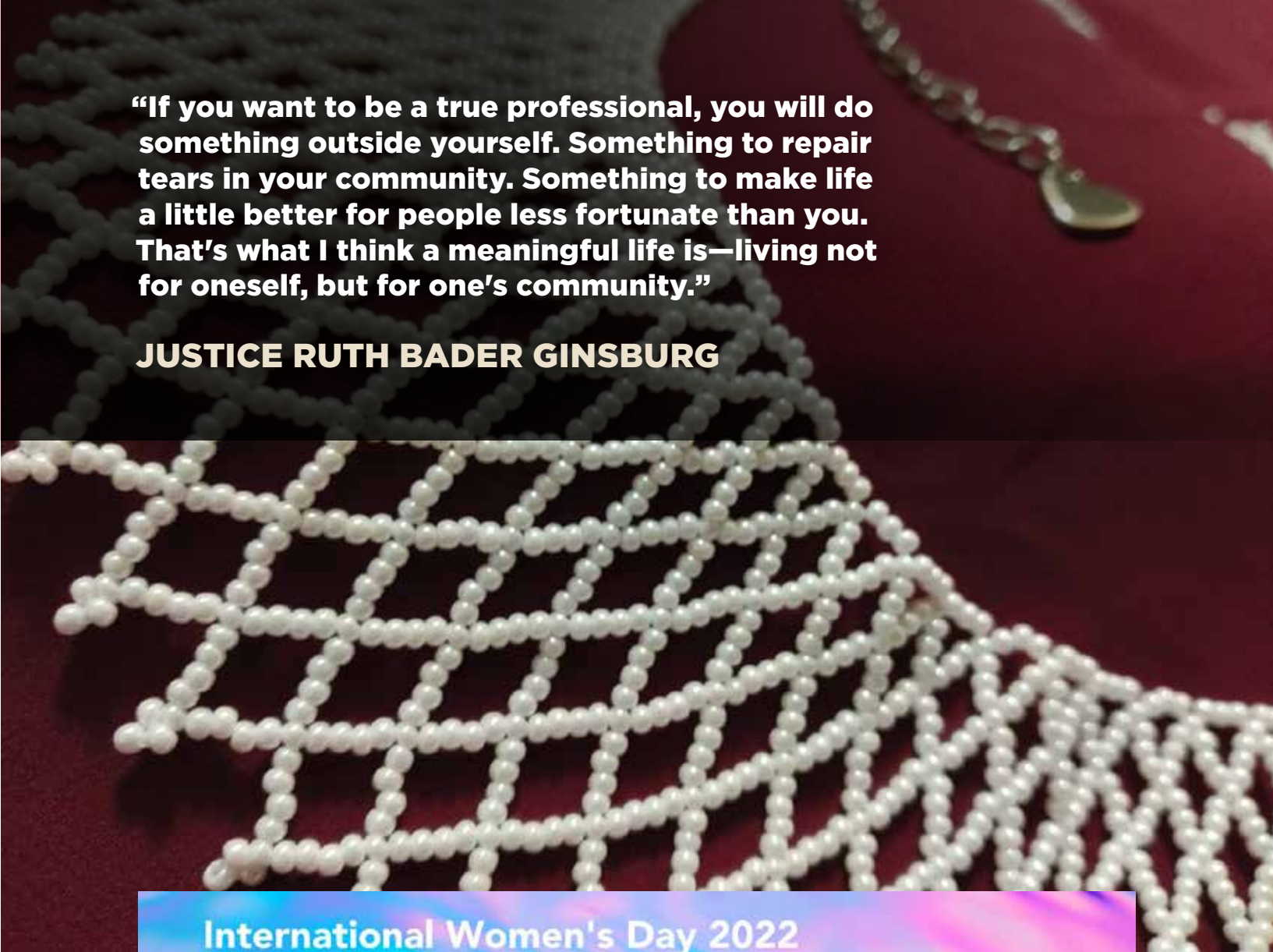


“AT MCNEES WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL LEGAL AID. WE AT MCNEES WILL MANY TIMES SAY THAT WE ARE A HELPING PROFESSION AND WE WANT TO HELP AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. ... NOTHING IS MORE POWERFUL IN COMBATTING POVERTY THAN A LEGAL AID ADVOCATE.”

**JAMES P. DEANGELO, ESQUIRE,
MCNEES WALLACE & NURICK**

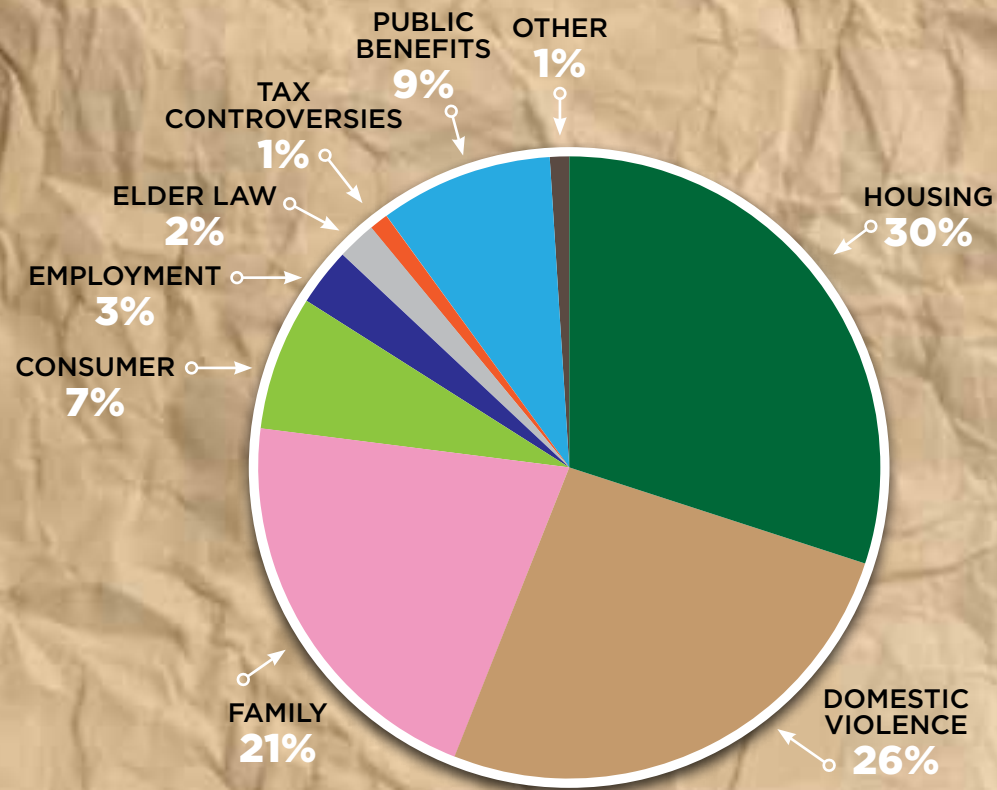
“If you want to be a true professional, you will do something outside yourself. Something to repair tears in your community. Something to make life a little better for people less fortunate than you. That’s what I think a meaningful life is—living not for oneself, but for one’s community.”

JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG



International Women's Day 2022





107,667

hours spent on cases

\$3,229,882

in savings and economic benefits to MidPenn clients and their communities

21,299

adults and children benefited from MidPenn's advocacy

Fiscal Year 21-22 Overview

	MidPenn Staff	Volunteer Attorneys	Total	%
Housing	2,830	54	2,884	30%
Domestic Violence	2,434	73	2,507	26%
Family	1,359	667	2,026	21%
Consumer	586	125	711	7%
Employment	289	2	291	3%
Elder Law	123	43	166	2%
Tax Controversies	158	0	158	1%
Public Benefits	799	43	842	9%
Other	55	47	102	1%
TOTAL	8,633	1,054	9,687	100%

2021-2022 Financials

Revenues and Other Support

Contracts and grants	\$ 9,737,375	\$ 9,847,956
Contributions:		
Non-financial assets	\$ 817,161	\$ 463,179
Other	\$ 86,234	\$ 203,315
Investment Income	\$ 233,516	\$ 183,672
Net realized & unrealized gain (loss) on investments	\$ (947,196)	\$ 609,548
Other	\$ 4,323	\$ 13,771
Total Revenue and Other Support	\$ 9,931,413	\$ 11,321,441

Expenses

Program Services	\$ 8,822,459	\$ 8,675,747
Management and general	\$ 1,190,255	\$ 1,165,792
Fundraising	\$ 13,125	\$ 8,777
Total Expenses	\$ 10,025,839	\$ 9,850,316

Major Funders

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Adams County Bar Association | Hershey Company | State College Community Land Trust |
| Adams County Commissioners | Huntingdon-Bedford-Fulton Area Agency on Aging | The Long Family Educational Foundation |
| Alexander Stewart, M.D. Foundation | Internal Revenue Service | United Way of Berks County |
| AmazonSmile Foundation | Lancaster Bar Association Foundation | United Way of Blair County |
| Berks Community Health Center | Lancaster County Coalition to End Homelessness | United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County |
| Big Spring Community Chest | Lancaster County Office of Aging | United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley |
| Blair County Bar Association | Lebanon County Area Agency on Aging | United Way Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey |
| Young Lawyers Committee | Lebanon County Bar Association | United Way of Lancaster County |
| Campbell's Soup | Legal Services Corporation | United Way of Lebanon County |
| Centre County Office of Aging | LST III LLC | United Way of Mifflin-Juniata |
| Centre County United Way | Opportunity House | United Way of the Capital Region |
| Centre Foundation | Palmyra Gives | United Way of York County |
| Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – The Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania | Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency | Veterans Multi-Service Center |
| County of Lebanon | Pennsylvania Department of Human Services | WellSpan Health |
| Cumberland County Bar Foundation | Pennsylvania Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts Board | York County Area Agency on Aging |
| Dauphin County Bar Foundation | Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network | York County Bar Foundation/ Association |
| Dauphin County Community and Economic Development | Regional Housing Legal Services | York County Commissioners |
| Dickinson School of Law – Penn State | Schuylkill County Commissioners | |
| Domestic Violence Services of Cumberland & Perry Counties | Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services | |
| Faith United Church of Christ | Southwestern PA Legal Services | |
| Firespring | | |

PURSuing JUSTICE - *Improving Lives*

Administration

213-A N. Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
For Admin: 717-234-0492

Altoona

171 Lakemont Park
Boulevard
Altoona, PA 16602
For Services:
800-326-9177

Bedford

232 E. Pitt Street
Bedford, PA 15522
For Services:
800-326-9177

Carlisle

401 E. Louthier Street
Suite 103
Carlisle, PA 17013
For Services:
800-326-9177

Chambersburg

230 Lincoln Way East
Suite A
Chambersburg, PA 17201
For Services:
800-326-9177

Clearfield

211 East Locust Street
Clearfield, PA 16830
For Services:
800-326-9177

Gettysburg

123 Baltimore St.,
Suite 301
Gettysburg, Pa 17325
For Services:
800-326-9177

Harrisburg

213-A N. Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
800-326-9177

Lancaster

38 N. Christian Street
Suite 200
Lancaster, PA 17602
For Services:
800-326-9177

Lebanon

1150 Chestnut St., Suite 1
Lebanon, PA 17402
For Services:
800-326-9177

Lewistown

3 W. Monument Square
Suite 303
Lewistown, PA 17044
For Services:
800-326-9177

Pottsville

315 N. Centre Street
Suite 101
Pottsville, PA 17901
800-326-9177

Reading

35 North Sixth Street
Mezzanine Suite 101
Reading, PA 19601
For Services:
800-326-9177

State College

3500 E. College Avenue
Suite 1295
State College, PA 16801
For Services:
800-326-9177

York

29 N. Queen Street
York, PA 17403
For Services:
800-326-9177



Mid Penn
LEGAL SERVICES

Administrative Offices

213-A N. Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-234-0492

<https://www.midpenn.org/>

