



**LEGAL ASSISTANCE
FOR SENIORS**

IMPACT REPORT

2023–2024

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

Thank you for continuing to partner with Legal Assistance for Seniors (LAS) as we serve older adults across Alameda County. We're pleased to update you on how your support has impacted the lives of LAS clients.

Over the past year, the LAS team of staff and volunteers has supported more than 13,700 older adults to secure their basic needs and increase their stability in the community. As the cost of living continues to rise, our attorneys and advocates stand beside our clients to protect their housing, healthcare, and access to public benefits. As the Medicare landscape becomes increasingly complex, our HICAP team helps adults navigate the Medicare maze to obtain the best coverage that meets their needs at the lowest possible cost. In addition to providing direct services to clients, our team also provides community education and engages in legislative advocacy at local and state levels. Your generosity ensures that older adults can live their lives with the peace and security they so greatly deserve.

Our client population continues to grow across our County, and LAS is well-positioned to expand, focusing on communities that need our services most. We're particularly inspired by the dedication of our team. In a world where older adults are often overlooked or forgotten, we're proud that every person who connects with our agency is met with a seamless blend of professionalism, respect, and empathy. Our team centers the well-being of our clients as our North Star, and this commitment guides our every decision.

As LAS grows to address clients' needs, we're humbled by your support and generosity. Thank you for empowering the LAS team to meet people where they are, tailoring services to provide individualized care to each client. LAS supporters are the reason we achieve our critical mission, and we look forward to all we'll accomplish together in the coming years.

On behalf of the thousands of older adults we serve every year, thank you.

With Gratitude,



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Caitlin Chan
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Patterson".

Dawn Patterson
President, Board of Directors

COMMUNITY IMPACT

LAS SERVED *

13,787

**PEOPLE ACROSS
ALAMEDA COUNTY**



3,041
LEGAL SERVICES

**Legal support
and advocacy**



8,843
CE SERVICES

**Community outreach
and education**



1,903
HICAP SERVICES

**One-on-one healthcare
counseling and advocacy**

**Last Fiscal Year (July 2023 – June 2024)*

ABOUT LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS

Legal Assistance for Seniors (LAS) was founded in 1976 by three local women who identified a significant community need for free legal services for low-income older adults.

LAS still exists because older adults continue to face financial fraud, elder abuse, unfair housing practices, or challenges navigating other legal matters. But that's just a part of how we help people in our communities.

Fulfilling our mission is complex too, as our team of dedicated staff and volunteers work tirelessly to protect the rights of older adults through direct support, education, healthcare counseling, and advocacy. Our vision is for all seniors to live safely and with the greatest possibility for independence, regardless of their economic, social, or health circumstances.

We prioritize client accessibility to our services across communities in Alameda County. We meet people in their homes, at court, within senior housing and community centers, online, and over the phone. Additionally, LAS utilizes translation services and offers multilingual educational materials, all at no cost to clients.

In 2026, we'll be celebrating our agency's 50th anniversary. We hope we won't need to exist in another 50 years, because the rights of seniors will be respected and their needs met. But if local trends continue, LAS will exist and will need to grow to properly support the older adults we serve.



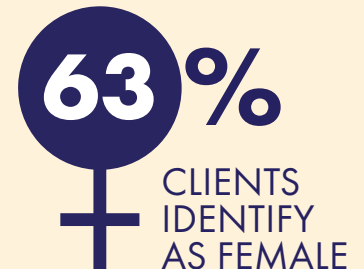
LAS Founders, from left to right: Willie James, Jane Welch, and Doka Clausen, 1976

LEGAL SERVICES

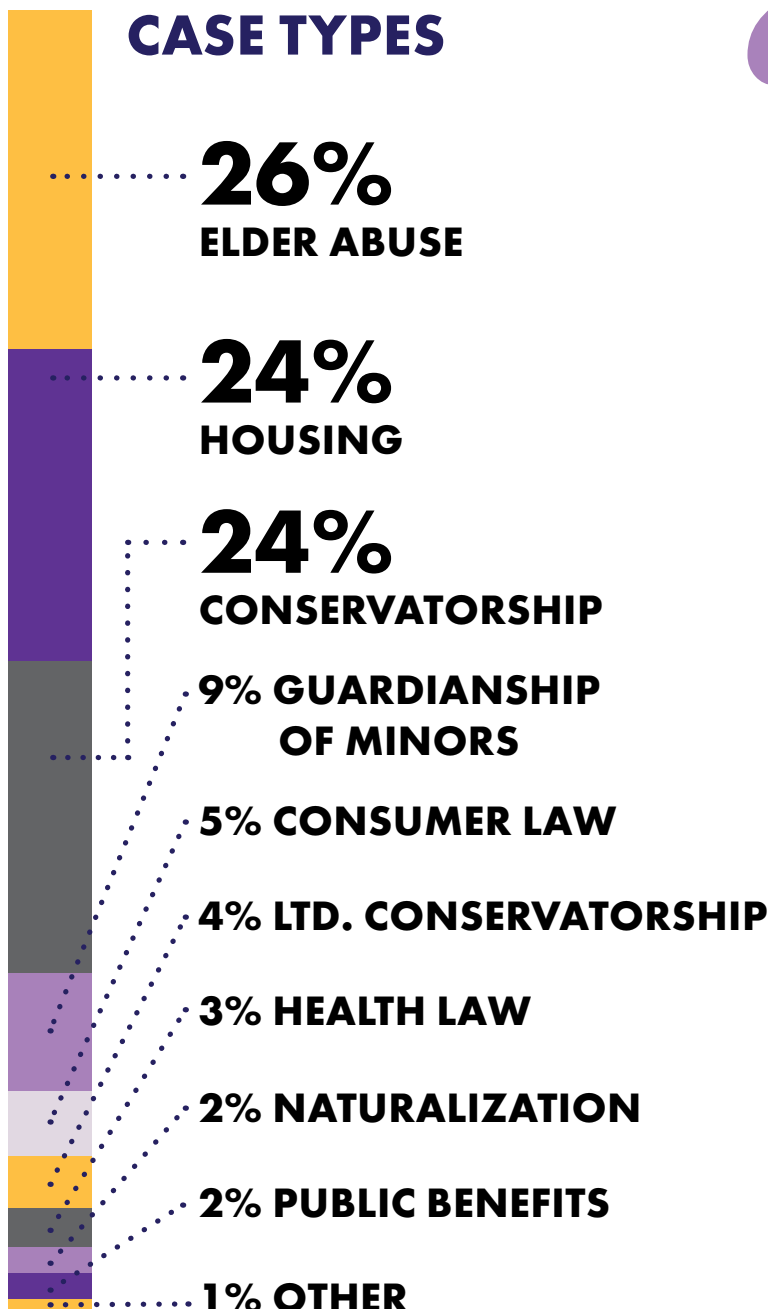
Through community support, our legal team continues to advocate for and support the rights of older adults. The legal assistance provided to each client is customized to best meet individual needs.

Current trends show an increase in requests related to consumer fraud, housing and tenants' rights, and elder abuse.

LEGAL TEAM SERVED*

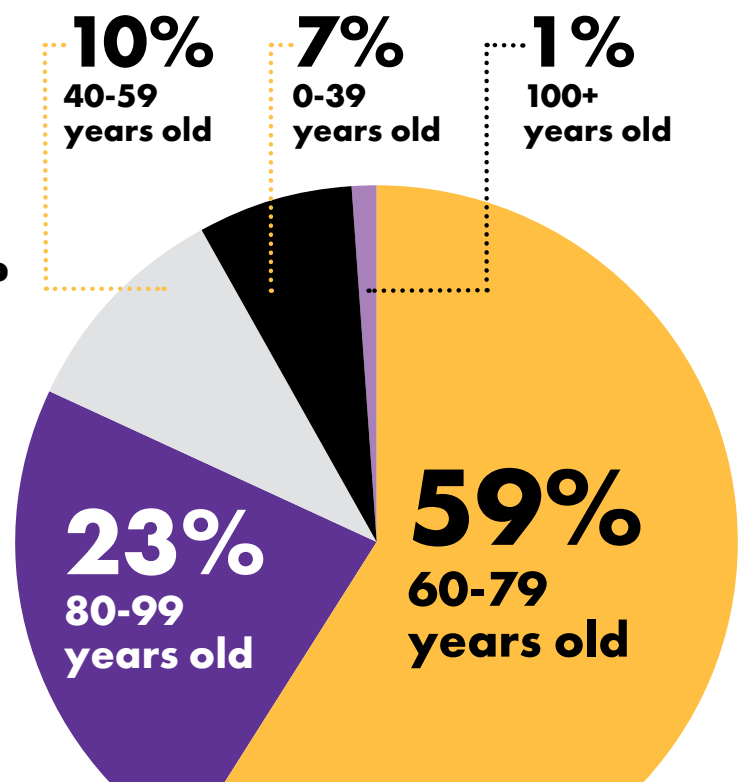


CASE TYPES



Helen [Senior Staff Attorney] did what she had to do for my case. She really took it on. She was caring and concerned about me. Even if we hadn't won, I would've been okay because she made me feel supported. I so appreciate the services I received at LAS!

— Louella Edwards,
Legal Services client

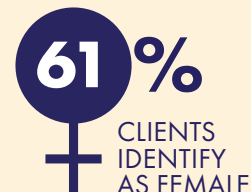


*Last Fiscal Year (July 2023 – June 2024)

HEALTH INSURANCE COUNSELING & ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Over the past 36 years, our Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) has helped adults navigate through the Medicare system. HICAP clients receive free one-on-one counseling and other support from certified HICAP Counselors.

HICAP TEAM SERVED*



Mr. Roth and Carol Sandoval

79-year-old Mr. Roth connected with LAS after he learned about HICAP services in 2024. Mr. Roth faced significant Medicare late enrollment penalties that were wrongly imposed, and he felt overwhelmed. Once Medicare penalties are established, they apply each month until a person dies.

Volunteer HICAP Counselor, Carol Sandoval, met with Mr. Roth and confirmed he was eligible for a Medicare special enrollment period. Carol covered each step of the process with Mr. Roth, and shared information about his rights and status.

"I see firsthand what clients go through. It's very daunting, for all of us," Carol noted.

Mr. Roth said, "Carol made a sincere effort to help me and teach me. She gave me support when hurdles came up, over many months." He continued, "Look, I'm a human being who just needed help and I never felt judged by Carol or [LAS] staff for needing it."

Mr. Roth recently called Carol to share the news that his Medicare penalties were reversed, his full benefits were restored, and he was now covered on an affordable health plan.

They celebrated together.

"Getting clients the information they need, seeing that we've helped them, and knowing we're serving a greater purpose... I make a real difference. That's why I volunteer for LAS," said Carol.

Mr. Roth shared, "My penalties are gone. I now have medical care, so I can check on my long-standing health issues. You know, what would be the real economic burden on a person, on a community, if you all weren't around? What would happen to all these people, like me?"



From left to right: Brianna Fluhrer (Legal Advocate), Alexandra Havrylyshyn (Staff Attorney), Jenny Pardini (Community Education Manager), Carol Sandoval (Volunteer HICAP Counselor), and Christian Ramos (Provisionally Licensed Lawyer)

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICES

8,843
PEOPLE

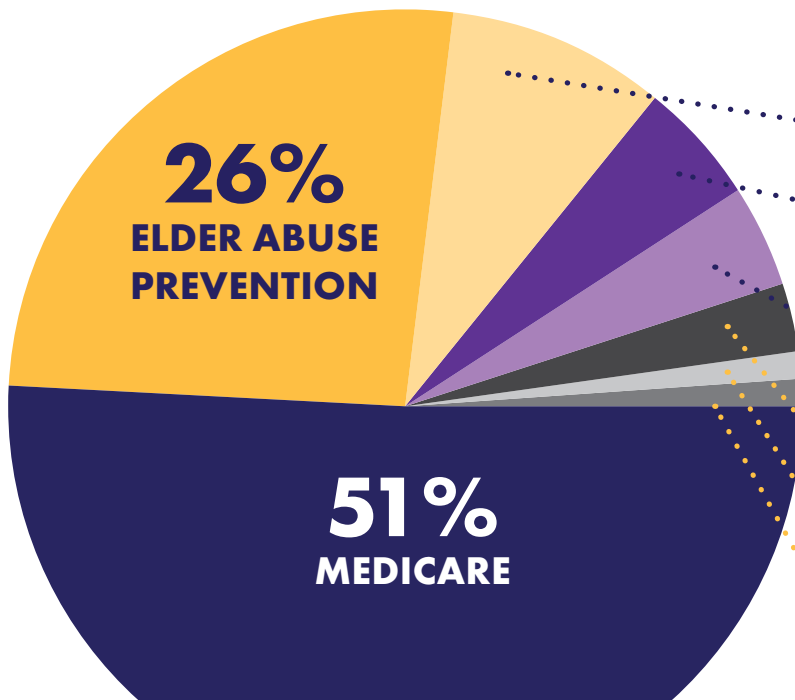
Since 1988, our Community Education (CE) team has provided educational opportunities through deep partnerships with senior centers, houses of worship, senior residences, and community centers across Alameda County.

CE TEAM SERVED*

287
PRESENTATIONS

19
CITIES

46
OUTREACH
ACTIVITIES



PRESENTATION TOPICS

9% HOUSING RIGHTS

**5% ADVANCED HEALTH
CARE DIRECTIVES**

**4% HOME & COMMUNITY
BASED SERVICES**

3% HOMEOWNERSHIP & AGING

1% GUARDIANSHIP OF MINORS

1% PUBLIC BENEFITS

➤ CONFERENCE ON ELDER ABUSE

In 2024, thanks to the support from our 23 Sponsors and Supporters, LAS brought back our in-person Conference on Elder Abuse (CEA).

CEA is a daylong convening that brings together professionals working across many disciplines who focus on addressing elder abuse.

This year's CEA was attended by nearly 200 people, held at UC Law San Francisco. Scholarships and community awards were made available through the generous support of our Conference Sponsors.



CEA attendees listen to the keynote by Erin West, Cybercrime and Crypto Expert, Deputy District Attorney, Santa Clara County

*Last Fiscal Year (July 2023 – June 2024)

ADVOCACY

In addition to direct services, LAS works alongside other community organizations to support local, state, and federal legislation that protects older adults. We believe that by creating strong legal protections we can decrease the number of legal and socioeconomic issues our clients face.



Panelists at the 2024 Conference on Elder Abuse, from left to right: Shawna Reeves (LAS Special Projects Consultant), Matthew Sugiyama (Founder of Protecting our Seniors), Alice Lin (Financial Elder Abuse Survivor & Advocate), and Anne Marie Murphy (Principal Attorney at Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy LLP)

278: Protecting Seniors from Elder Financial Exploitation

LAS was an active advocate for California Senate Bill 278 (Dodd), a first-in-the-nation bill that focused on preventing older and dependent adults from losing their life savings to elder financial exploitation. The bill created a comprehensive, up front scam prevention policy for banks and credit unions operating in California, and SB 278 passed through the Legislature in August 2024.

In collaboration with 32 other community organizations, LAS sent a joint letter to Governor Newsom expressing collective support of SB 278. The Governor vetoed SB 278, but in his veto message, he wrote, "I encourage the Legislature to continue refining this concept."

SB 278's architecture is being studied nationwide and could serve as a catalyst for federal protection laws aimed at preventing elder financial exploitation. LAS looks forward to continuing our commitment to advancing elder law protections.

Community Connectivity

As a member of the California Low Income Consumer Coalition (CLICC), LAS works on bills

to protect older adults from financial abuse, abusive debt collection practices, and junk fees.

In October 2023, these 3 CLICC sponsored bills passed the California Legislature and were approved by the Governor:

- **AB 1414** eliminates common counts in consumer debt collection cases.
- **AB 1119** ensures that no one is imprisoned because of unpaid consumer debt.
- **SB 478** eliminates junk fees for products and services sold online.

LAS is an active member of the following advocacy groups:

- Alameda County Council for Age-Friendly Communities, Leadership Committee & Housing Committee
- California Health Advocates
- California Low Income Consumer Coalition
- Legal Aid Association of California
- Legal Impact Network for Kin
- Preventing Older Homelessness Steering Committee led by Justice in Aging
- Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

* Unaudited

Operating Revenue	FY 23–24 *	Operating Expenses	FY 23–24 *
Grants & Contributions	\$2,676,064	Program Services	\$2,389,773
Donated Services	\$126,502	Management & General	\$728,448
Program Service Revenue	\$293,483	Fundraising	\$164,713
Other Income	\$67,413		
TOTAL	\$3,163,462	TOTAL	\$3,282,934

Strategic investments in staff and other capacity building initiatives increased operational expenditures last fiscal year (July 2023 – June 2024). This is part of a 4-year sustainability plan, with the goal of right-sizing LAS and reaching a balanced budget in fiscal year 2026-2027. Additional financial information is available upon request.



2024 CEA presentation: “How Scammers Use Loans to Steal Older Homeowners’ Life Savings” by Kathleen Thaete (Housing and Economic Rights Advocates), Sil Vossler (The Vossler Law Firm), Peter Fredman (Law Office of Peter Fredman)

YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFT MAKES A DIRECT IMPACT!

LAS CHARITABLE TAX ID **#94-2941697**



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Ken Arora	Alison Hightower	Daniel Norton
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STAFF

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Shawn Mountcastle	Associate Director

Terri Ohryn-Doyle	Health Law Advocate II/Assistant Volunteer Coordinator
Semetra Oliver	Community Education Advocate II
Jessica Oropeza	Accounting Assistant
Jenny Pardini	Community Education Manager
Emma Petersen	Legal Advocate II
Christian Ramos	Provisionally Licensed Lawyer
Shawna Reeves	Special Projects Consultant
Nancy Reno	Receptionist
Felecia Robinson	Case Manager
Mariko Sarafin	Philanthropy Manager
Tammy Spencer	Office/HR Manager
Jacob Sytsma	HICAP Volunteer Coordinator
Revonia Thompson	Administrative Assistant
Leo Treggiari	IT Specialist
Janet Van Deusen	HICAP Manager
Kirsten Voyles	Legal Director



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