LEGAL ASSISTANCE
FOR SENIORS

IMPACT REPORT

2024–2025

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

To our community,

Legal Assistance for Seniors (LAS) has served older adults in Alameda County for nearly 50 years because of your continued support. Thank you.

In all of that time, the past year has been notable for some of the most destabilizing news and seismic shifts to the lives of older adults we have ever seen. Seniors in our community are facing unparalleled barriers to accessing basic needs like secure housing, personal safety, and essential healthcare.

In a world that is getting turned upside down, older adults need a community organization they can trust. At LAS, our staff and volunteers work every day to ensure our elders can age with stability and peace of mind. Through crucial, no-cost legal services, Medicare counseling, community education, and policy advocacy, we protect the homes, health, and safety of older adults.

In the following pages, we want to share with you what our clients have accomplished over the last year in partnership with our staff and volunteers.

One truth remains constant; we can't do this alone. Thank you for being part of this community that cares about our seniors aging with peace and dignity.

With deep gratitude,

Caitlin Chan
Executive Director

Kelsey Craven
President, Board of Directors

COMMUNITY IMPACT

LAS SERVED

12,826

PEOPLE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE

3,102
LEGAL SERVICES

Legal support and advocacy

7,510
CE SERVICES

Community outreach and education

2,214
HICAP SERVICES

One-on-one health insurance counseling and advocacy

All client data in this report are from last fiscal year, July 2024 – June 2025.

ABOUT US

Legal Assistance for Seniors (LAS) provides free legal services, Medicare counseling, community education, and advocacy to older adults in Alameda County. Our attorneys and advocates remove barriers so that seniors have their basic human needs met – basic needs like secure housing, personal safety, and essential healthcare.

LAS was established as a vital community service for Oakland area seniors in 1976 after three local women (Doka Clausen, Willie James, and Jane Welch) saw a growing need for free legal services for older adults.

Through the generosity of our community supporters, LAS has been able to help seniors navigate critical legal and healthcare-related processes for decades.

In 2026, we'll be celebrating our 50th Anniversary of ensuring older adults across Alameda County can age with dignity and peace of mind.

MISSION & VISION

LAS' mission is to ensure the well-being and independence of older adults by protecting their legal rights through direct legal services, Medicare counseling, community education, and legislative advocacy.

LAS' vision is for seniors to live safely in our communities with the greatest possibility of independence, regardless of their economic, social, or health circumstances.

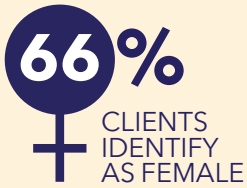
LAS Founders, from left to right: Willie James, Jane Welch, and Doka Clausen, 1976

LEGAL SERVICES

Our practice areas include elder abuse, consumer, housing, guardianship of minors, public benefits, health law, naturalization and limited conservatorships. LAS attorneys are also appointed by the court to represent proposed conservatees in conservatorship cases.

Our attorneys and advocates tailor our services to meet the needs of their clients, including doing home visits, working with interpreters, and providing assisted listening devices when necessary.

LEGAL TEAM SERVED:



CASE TYPES

30%
Housing

14%
Elder Abuse

8% Conservatoriship
Court-Appointed Representation

7% Consumer Law

7% Guardianship of Minors

3% Limited Conservatorship

3% Public Benefits

3% Naturalization

2% Health Law

23% Consultations & Referrals

What do Clients like most about LAS?

"Ms. Burba [LAS Sr. Staff Attorney] was dedicated to my case, and I feel satisfied with the services I received. They [LAS team] are all such respectful and wonderful people. I know I can contact them again if I need more help." – A.K.

"Having someone to turn to when there is nobody. It was miraculous to get the help I needed to recover a just amount of my rental security deposit instead of zero." – N.P.

"For seniors like me on fixed incomes and without resources, LAS is a Godsend." – A.B.S.

HICAP SERVICES

Over the past 37 years, our volunteer-driven Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP) has supported Medicare beneficiaries with free, one-on-one counseling and direct advocacy from certified counselors.

HICAP Counselors are volunteers who receive extensive training to become certified Medicare counselors registered through the State of California, Department of Aging.

HICAP TEAM SERVED:

2,214 PEOPLE

5,146 VOLUNTEER HOURS

88% CLIENTS AGED 65+

51% CLIENTS IDENTIFY AS FEMALE

Q&A WITH PAT MACHOLL

Q: How did you first become connected to HICAP?

A: I read an article about HICAP in the Alameda Journal. I learned about the program, how it helps Medicare beneficiaries in need of support,and I answered their call to join as a new HICAP volunteer.

Q: What's one of your favorite parts about volunteering for HICAP?

A: I know what I do helps people. I talk to them. I support them. Our clients, understandably, don't know how to process all the Medicare and other health insurance information they receive. I help translate and summarize this information, so our clients understand what's happening, what their best options are.

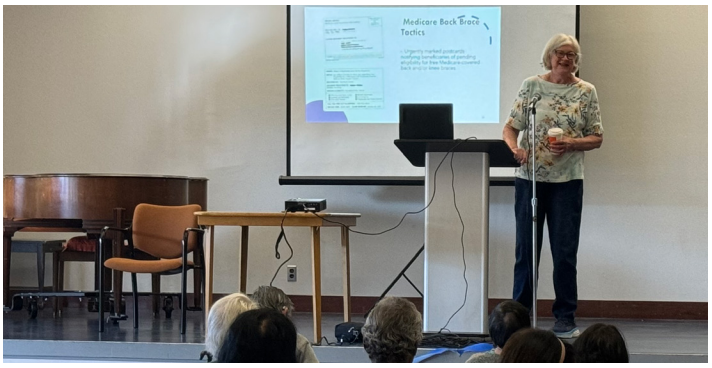
Q: How long have you volunteered for HICAP?

A: 13 years, so far.

Q: Why do you continue to volunteer as a HICAP Counselor?

A: I still have the ability to help people, why wouldn't I? HICAP is a way for me to make a difference, and is much better than just putting my feet up and watching TV while in retirement. You have to do something when you see people in need. That's what I believe.

Through HICAP, Pat Macholl has served over 830 clients, and counting.



Pat is LAS' Senior Medicare Patrol liaison. Pat is pictured presenting at LAS' Scam Jam at South Berkeley Senior Center, Oct. 2024.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICES

Through deep partnerships with senior centers, houses of worship, senior residences, and community centers, our Community Education (CE) team meets older adults where they are to provide free presentations on topics like elder abuse, housing rights, public benefits, consumer fraud, Medicare, and much more, all in service of protecting seniors' rights.

CE TEAM SERVED:

7,510 PEOPLE

267 PRESENTATIONS

14 CITIES

PROGRAMS

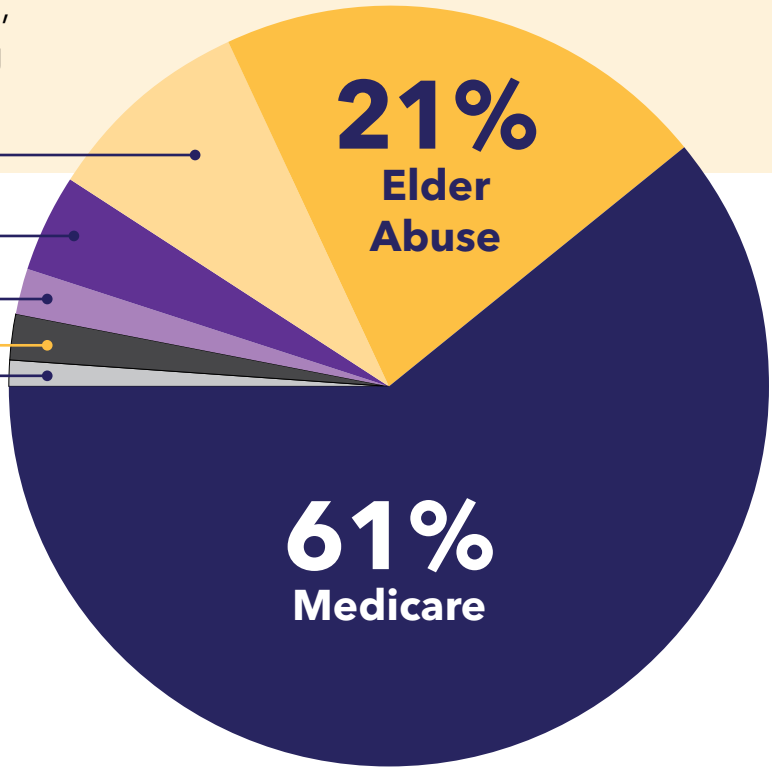
8% Housing

4% Home & Community-Based Services

2% Advanced Health Care Directives

2% Public Benefits

1% Guardianship



CONFERENCE ON ELDER ABUSE

Each year, LAS convenes our Conference on Elder Abuse (CEA) to bring together cross-sector professionals working across multiple disciplines who all focus on addressing and preventing elder abuse.

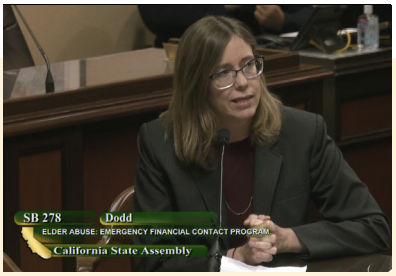
In May, our Conference on Elder Abuse was attended by over 200 people and was held at UC Law San Francisco.

This year, through the generosity of our Conference Sponsors and Supporters, our recent 19th Conference on Elder Abuse supported dozens of scholarships and three conference awards to recognize senior services leaders and community allies.

Attendees at 2025 CEA

ADVOCACY

In addition to direct services, LAS works alongside other community organizations to support local and state laws to better protects older adults. We believe our representation in senior advocacy coalitions helps to decrease the number of legal and socioeconomic issues our clients face by creating a strong community network across our senior service agencies.



Shawna Reeves, LAS Special Projects Consultant, testifying in support of SB 278

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
- Senior and Disability Action
- Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

Advocacy Highlights

LAS continues to focus its policy efforts on increasing protection and services for low-income BIPOC older adults in Alameda County. As a member of CLICC, LAS supported AB 2837 (Bauer-Kahan), a bill to provide deeply needed protection for low-income consumers with debt who have had their wages over-garnished and/or their bank accounts over-levied. LAS also supported CLICC bill SB 1061 (Limón), a bill to remove medical debt from credit reports. Both of these bills passed and were signed into law during the 2023-2024 legislative session.

During the 2024-2025 legislative session, LAS has worked on and supported the following CLICC bills:

- **AB 909 (Schiavo)**: A bill aimed to protect older adults from elder financial exploitation by requiring financial institutions to prevent fraud and provide reimbursement for victims.
- **AB 747 (Kalra)**: The Reforming Service of Process (SPARE) Act would protect consumers from improper or fraudulent service of legal documents.
- **SB 766 (Allen)**: A bill based on a previous Federal Trade Commission (FTC) rule, enacting new protections for car buyers.
- **SB 825 (Limón)**: A bill to enhance the California Department of Protection and Innovation (DFPI) by authorizing it to enforce state consumer financial protection laws over entities it currently regulates.

Although AB 909 was paused by its author, AB 747, SB 766, and SB 825 all passed the California State Legislature and were recently signed by Governor Newsom.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Operating Revenue	FY 24-25* (unaudited)
Grants & Contributions	$2,621,108
Donated Services	$172,414
Program Service Revenue	$248,334
Other Income	$73,511
TOTAL	**$3,118,367**

Operating Expenses	FY 24-25*
Program Services	$2,412,184
Management & General	$928,657
Fundraising	$216,227
TOTAL	**$3,557,068**

*Strategic investments in staff and other capacity building initiatives increased operational expenditures last fiscal year (July 2024–June 2025). 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.

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LAS Charitable Tax ID #94-2941697

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Oakland, CA 94621

VOLUNTEERS

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LEGAL

Gene Harris	**Virginia Palmer**	**Vanessa Peterson (Intern)**
Paul McDonnell	**Justin Kaley (Intern)**	**Yuyao Sun (Intern)**

HICAP (MEDICARE) COUNSELORS

Ken Arora	**Alison Hightower**	**Daniel Norton**
Arnie Becker	**John Hightower**	**Janet Quilici**
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STAFF

Lovella Aldridge-Barney
Legal Advocate III

Kristen Boney
Supervising Attorney

Katie Burba
Senior Staff Attorney

Caitlin Chan
Executive Director

Meleana Chun-Moy
UCLA Legal Fellow

Caitlin Doyle
Supervising Attorney

Alexandra Havrylyshyn
Staff Attorney

Helen Hoeffel
Senior Staff Attorney

Karen Kavanagh
HICAP Advocate II

Mariel Kusano
Supervising Attorney

Edmund Lam
Multilingual Advocate III

Kyle Little
Legal Advocate II

Lao Ly
Staff Attorney

Natasha Mascarenhas
HICAP Advocate II

Aileen Mejia
Legal Program Assistant

Edita Mercado
Accounting Manager

Shawn Mountcastle
Associate Director

Terri Ohryn-Doyle
Health Law Advocate/
Volunteer Coordinator

Semetra Oliver
Community Education Advocate II

Katie Orsetti
Operations Coordinator

Jenny Pardini
Community Education Manager

Christian Ramos
Provisionally Licensed Lawyer

Shawna Reeves
Special Projects Consultant

Felecia Robinson
Case Manager

Mariko Sarafin
Philanthropy Manager

Jacob Sytsma
HICAP Manager

Natalie Vinton
HICAP Volunteer Coordinator

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