

2020 Annual Report

SAFETY | HOUSING | HEALTH



Amid the pandemic's devastation, the needs of our neighbors surged.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the deeply entrenched inequities that have long torn at the fabric of our community. Low-income workers in our tourism and hospitality industries. People of color. Older adults. Single mothers and their children. These were among the groups hardest hit by the social and economic impacts of the greatest public health crisis in a century.

Jacksonville Area Legal Aid answered pleas for help from seniors and families facing wrongful eviction, domestic violence survivors, and children whose pre-existing

health problems were exacerbated by the struggles their parents faced.

Your support was critical to our response. JALA took on cases where we believed a lawyer could make a difference in the outcome and provided advice and self-help resources in as many cases as possible.

JALA has increasingly relied upon private donations to fund our services and operations. Florida is one of just two U.S. states that provide no general state funding for civil legal aid, and the City of Jacksonville is the only large city in Florida that

provides zero general support for legal aid. Traditional funders, like The Florida Bar Foundation, no longer play their traditional roles.

So, when JALA's domestic violence intakes more than doubled in 2020 and requests for help in landlord-tenant matters increased by 50%, donors and funders played a crucial role in supporting the work of our team. Meanwhile, Freed to Run, the annual multi-marathon fundraiser for our pediatric Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership, went on in spite of the pandemic.

Many of your Northeast Florida neighbors are safe, housed and healthy today because of your contributions to JALA. Thank you!



SERVICES PROVIDED BY CASE TYPE

● Consumer	598
● Employment	263
● Family & Children	1,049
● Health	75
● Housing	2,072
● Disability Rights & Benefits	380
● Individual Rights	1,107
● Miscellaneous	513
TOTAL CASES HANDLED	6,057
TOTAL PEOPLE IMPACTED *	14,173

* based on number of people in client households

JALA'S SERVICES IN 2020



14,173

People Served

1,913

Advised Through Legal Clinics

\$1,500,000

in Pro Bono Services Provided by Private Attorneys Through JALA

458

Veterans Served



1,406

Domestic Violence Survivors Sought Legal Help (Up 64% Since the Pandemic Began)

\$459,796

in Family Support for Domestic Violence Survivors & Others Secured

260

DV Survivors Requested Protective Orders (Up 117% Since the Pandemic Began)

\$718,045

in Income & Assets Protected by Averting Predatory Lending & Illegal Debt Collection



105%

Increase in Eviction Prevention Requests Since the Pandemic Began

122

Evictions Avoided Through Attorney Intervention

4,092

People Used JALA's Online Eviction Prevention Tool

62

Foreclosures Prevented & \$1,150,630 Secured in Financial Relief



1,278

Elders Served

45,759

Young Adults Protected from Wrongful Termination of Medicaid Benefits

1,209

People with Disabilities Served & \$1,087,137 in Disability Benefits Secured

318

Children Referred to the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership

JALA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

"The COVID-19 pandemic amplified longstanding disparities in our community, and many of its impacts are just beginning. We expect to see an explosion in evictions with the ending of the CDC moratorium, and we are counting on broad support from the community to help us serve those still struggling to get back on their feet. Our work promotes economic stability, which assists everyone in our community."

Jim Kowalski, President & CEO



PROTECTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS



"On a normal day, survivors live in fear, but when there is a lockdown, 'safe at home' is not safe for everyone."

Michele Broyles

Division Chief, Family Law & Victim Advocacy Unit

JALA represents and assists survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking in civil legal proceedings, from restraining orders to divorce and child custody.

The pandemic led to a doubling of requests for help from domestic violence survivors, with JALA's staff handling more than 300 domestic violence intakes in 2020, compared to 140 in 2019. While JALA can't provide full representation to everyone in need of assistance, its staff and attorneys offer some form of help in domestic violence cases, whether it be advice and counsel, referral to other organizations, document preparation, limited representation for a court event, or full representation.

PREVENTING UNLAWFUL EVICTIONS



"Stable, safe, affordable housing is often an essential tool for both increasing economic mobility and promoting good physical and mental health outcomes."

Mary DeVries, Division Chief, Housing Unit

Helping Tenants Help Themselves

Having foreseen a surge in eviction filing during the pandemic, JALA launched a new online tool in mid-2020 to help Floridians create a legal response based on changing state and federal COVID-19 eviction protections. Supported by a grant from the [Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#), [FloridaEvictionHelp.org](#) helps Floridians eligible for a delay avoid being evicted because of an inadequate answer to the eviction filing. **It has been accessed by more than 14,000 Floridians, over 4,000 of whom used it to create a legal response.**

While more than twice as many people sought help with eviction in the year since the pandemic began, JALA's staff levels stayed the same. By giving tenants this online tool, JALA guided them automatically through the pleading drafting process and showed them how to file a response themselves. Under the

eviction moratoriums, tenants eligible for protection by virtue of having lost income because of the pandemic could thereby have the eviction actions halted on their own. JALA's work in developing [FloridaEvictionHelp.org](#) and supporting its statewide use was part of a multi-pronged effort, which included working with local agencies such as United Way to launch rent assistance programs delivering much-needed rental payments to landlords working with tenants to keep them housed.

Additionally, more than 170 tenants of private landlords in Duval County received help from JALA's Eviction Defense Self Help Project, including 34 who were facing eviction and more than 100 others who were dealing with landlords who were not adequately maintaining their properties. The project operates with pro bono attorneys and was initially funded by The Florida Bar Foundation. It is now in search of a permanent funding source.

JALA also collaborated with local partners to develop a pilot eviction diversion program in which landlords allow eligible tenants extra time to access assistance, catch up on rent, and avoid eviction utilizing \$5.3 million in CARES Act funding and the First Coast Relief Fund.

JALA prioritized its limited staff attorney resources to preventing evictions in cases with more complicated defenses requiring a lawyer's help, protecting tenants' rights to subsidized housing, and pursuing Fair Housing claims against private landlords.



HEALTHY CHILDREN, STABLE FAMILIES



"When you say you have an attorney to assist you and the backing of legal aid to help you, doors seem to open up and things that you couldn't make happen magically happen for you."

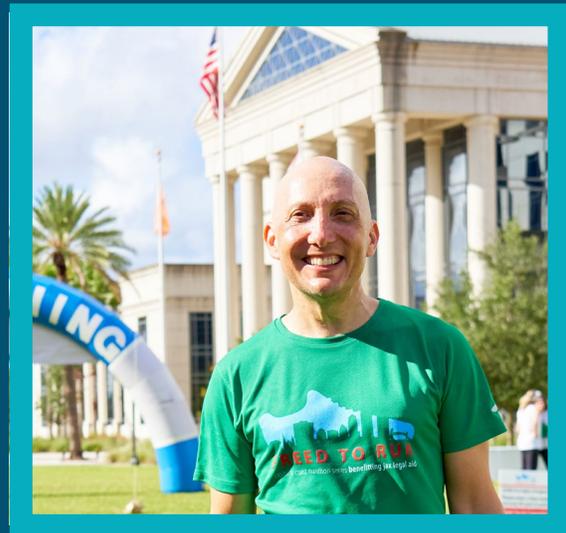
Brandie Campbell, mother of Isaac, a child who had lost his in-home nursing care until JALA intervened

Securing a child's access to health care, special education services and a safe family environment often requires legal aid. **Through our Northeast Florida Medical-Legal Partnership, JALA resolves civil legal issues affecting pediatric patients and their families, so they don't interfere with the child's wellness.** Our partners include Wolfson Children's Hospital, Nemours Children's Specialty Care, UF Health Specialty Pediatric Clinics and Community PedsCare®.

JALA continued to serve pediatric patients throughout the pandemic remotely, improved its referral system, and worked with partners on new ways to identify and respond to issues involving the social determinants of children's health. Area health-care institutions referred 318 children and their families to JALA through the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership for civil legal help in 2020.

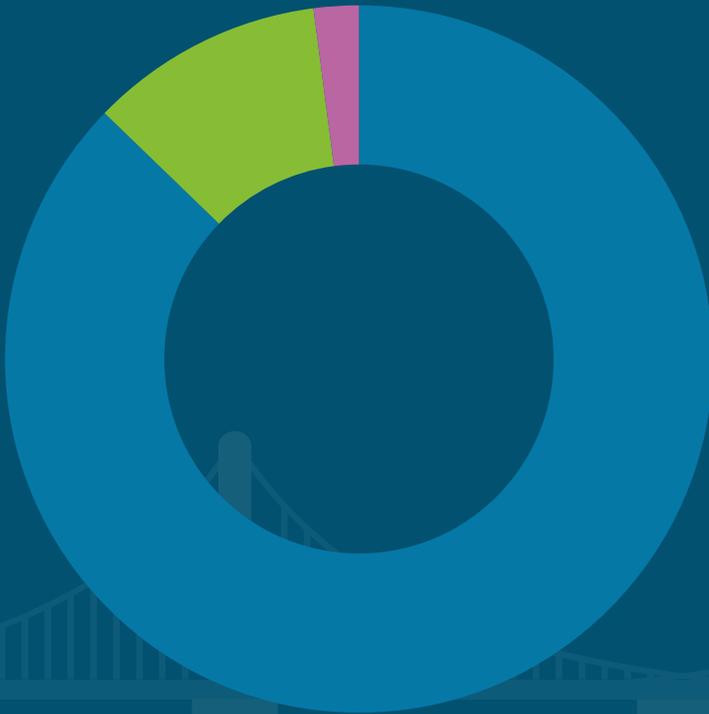
FREED TO RUN

Freed to Run has raised \$1.5 million toward the \$2.25 million needed to permanently endow the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership through a six-marathon series run by Gunster Shareholder Mike Freed and relay teams representing the health care, business, legal, nonprofit and education sectors. Baptist Health is matching all donations to the endowment at 125% up to \$1.25 million.



REVENUE AND FINANCIALS

2020 EXPENSES

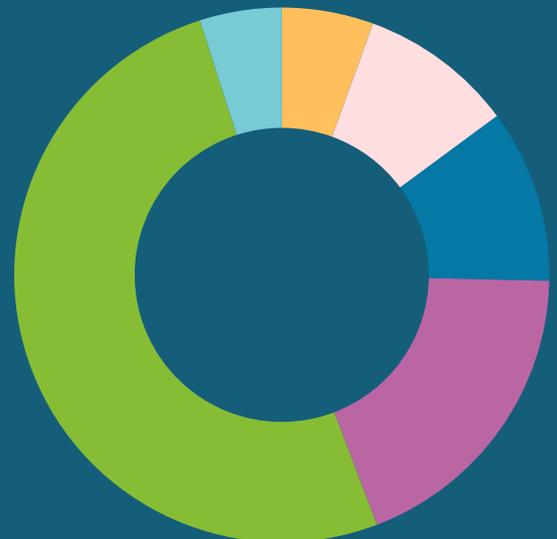


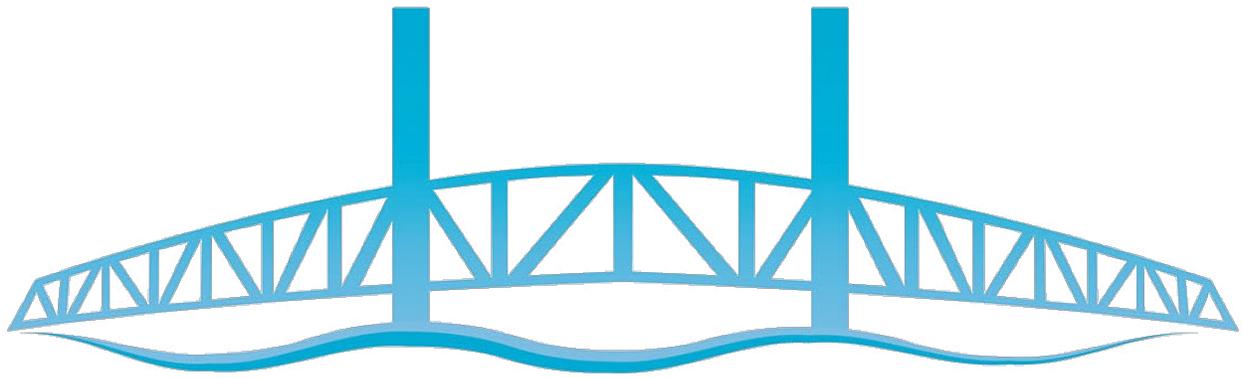
● Program *	\$6,633,306
● Management & General	\$814,351
● Fundraising	\$156,231
TOTAL	\$7,603,888

** Including the Value of Donated Services & Supplies*

2020 REVENUE

● Grants	\$4,019,348	50.84%
● Donated Services	\$1,490,626	18.85%
● COVID Assistance	\$828,833	10.48%
● County Funding	\$737,911	9.33%
● Contributions/Fundraising	\$438,235	5.54%
● Earned Income	\$391,597	4.95%
TOTAL	\$7,906,553	100%





Jacksonville Area Legal Aid

A WEALTH OF JUSTICE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NEITHER

Downtown Jacksonville Office

126 W. Adams St.
Jacksonville, FL 32202
Phone: (904) 356-8371
Toll-Free: (866) 356-8371

St. Johns County Legal Aid

222 San Marco Avenue
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Phone: (904) 827-9921
Toll Free: (877) 827-9921

Clay County Legal Aid

Located inside the Clay County Courthouse
825 N. Orange Avenue, Rm 308
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Phone: (904) 284-8410
Toll Free: (866) 284-8410

