

2020 Program Outputs: Your Dollars at Work

In 2020, BLC served
1,100+ people



BLC successfully waived
\$170,897

In debt assigned to
SSI/SSDI recipients by
SSA. These clients
were not at fault for
causing the debt.

On average, BLC spends \$924
to help one person navigate
toward economic stability



Photo by Daniel Berman

“ It’s not just about getting
benefits. Working with BLC has
changed my life. ”

-BLC Client

Board of Directors

Kelly Berg, Secretary
Tom Charlesworth
Jordan Clark
Abigail Daquiz
Stacey Krynsky
Shari Marion
Tim Moran, Treasurer
Maryann Nelson, President
Jay Stansell

Staff

Alex Doolittle Executive Director	Daniel Parker Mobile Attorney
Luwam Gabreselassie Paralegal	Alex Strout Paralegal
Peter Grieser Staff Attorney	Donna Whitford Development Associate
Madeleine Harnois SSAP Directing Attorney	Shannon Wong Development Director
Becca Maloney Staff Attorney	Marcos Zuñiga DHAP Directing Attorney
Kate Means Pandemic Attorney	

Table of Contents

Page | 1
Program Outputs
Staff & Board of Directors

Page | 2
Letter from the Executive Director
Donna Bond, Volunteer of the Year

Page | 3
2020 In Review
BLC Financials

Page | 4
Funders, Sponsors & Community Partners
Community Impact

Letter from the Executive Director

In 2020, BLC proved the opportunity to test our ability to adapt our services to any situation by responding to the limitations imposed on all of us by the COVID-19 pandemic. The staff carried out high quality advocacy, and continued to deliver on important strategic goals to build a stronger organization rooted in equity and breaking down barriers. BLC's community-centric model of service delivery is a critical component in our ability to ensure that the design of our services works to break barriers standing in the way of people accessing legal aid and Social Security benefits. This was tested by the Stay Home Stay Healthy requirements put in place in Washington. The pandemic limited our ability to show up physically to meet with one another. Luckily, we have built strong relationships with community organizations that provide wrap-around services to people living with disabilities.



Despite working primarily remotely for most of 2020, BLC still served over 1,100 people. Collaborative models of delivering case management, social services, and legal aid are needed and highly sought after in our community. The foundation and design of the partnerships we steward in the community is entirely built out of a need for equitable access to services. By removing systemic barriers by collaborating with other organizations we make accessing services easier and more equitable. With the addition of these types of partnerships, BLC has seen an increase in service delivery to people of color by 15%. In 2020, nearly 50% of individuals served at BLC are people of color. When compared with the population of people experiencing poverty in King County, our programs are proportionately serving low-income people of color who make up approximately 45% of the County's low-income population.

Thank you for your support throughout 2020. There is more work for us to accomplish in 2021, and we are looking ahead with renewed perspective, and a clear strategic path to deliver on while maintaining our commitments to dignity for all.

With Gratitude,

Alex KF Doolittle
Executive Director

Donna Bond

2020 Volunteer of the Year



At LOL for BLC in 2019 (right to left): Donna Bond, Mary Hotchkiss, and Abigail Daquiz.

After years of attending BLC events, Donna Bond became a fundraising committee member. She knew that she could make a difference in the lives of community members who need it most if she became involved.

Donna, an attorney herself, understood how important it was for BLC clients to have attorney representation. "I was lucky because my mom was able to fight through the complexities of the system. But not everyone is able to do that. Roughly 65% of people who figure out how to apply for benefits are initially denied."

When asked why Donna supports the Benefits Law Center, she smiled and said "Many reasons. It's practical. Eligibility for SSI or SSDI benefits opens the door to health care, housing, and other services which sick people desperately need. It's efficient. To me, helping people access the already-established safety net is one of the most efficient ways to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in our region and heading it off for others who are insecure in their housing/pre-homeless. It's compassionate. BLC provides necessary services in a compassionate, culturally appropriate and informed way."

We are grateful for the leadership and dedication volunteers like Donna. Keep an eye out for Donna at BLC events, or in our community using her expertise to make the world we live in a better place.

2020: Our Year In Review

January

Program Staff deliver service at 14 community locations



March

BLC shifts to working primarily remotely during COVID-19

September

BLC hires first ever "Pandemic Attorney"

Thank you for your support!

Board makes Juneteenth a celebrated holiday at BLC
June

Over 1100 people served throughout the year
December

Number of people living in King Co. without a home counted in January of 2020

11,751

In King Co
1 in 3

homeless people live with severe mental or physical disabilities

BLC successfully advocated for

\$170,897

In debt assigned to SSI/SSDI recipients be waived because they were not at fault in causing the debt

Pandemic Response

This year, we took our ability to deliver our life changing and in some cases life-saving services one step further. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people living with disabilities and people who are living without a home were hit hard with health and economic inequities. After making a quick transition to remote work, BLC continued to deliver legal aid to people needing to obtain and maintain access to their cash benefits.

- Defending against benefit terminations. When the pandemic shut down Social Security offices, the Agency stated that it would be ceasing all processing of benefit terminations. BLC joined advocates across the nation in ensuring that local Social Security offices held to this promise.
- CARES Act stimulus payments. People who are not required to file taxes were left out of the plan for delivering payments to individuals and households. BLC worked quickly to ensure that those of our clients who are "non-filers" were still able to access their stimulus payments.
- Helping older adults navigate retirement choices. Older adults working in high-exposure environments faced the decision of whether it would be beneficial to mitigate risk of COVID-19 by opting into early retirement. This is not a straight-forward decision. BLC attorneys helped individuals facing this decision navigate their choices.



BLC Staff Meetings in 2020 were held remotely each week.

Stable Delivery of Services That Are More Equitable

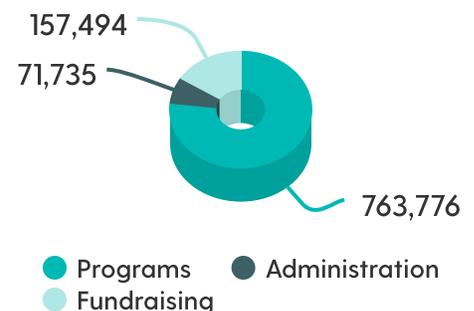
- Despite the new pressures presented by a pandemic, BLC also made progress in meeting the goals of our strategic plan. With the thoughtful expansion, BLC has seen an increase in service delivery to people of color by 15% so that nearly 50% of individuals that we serve are people of color bringing us in better alignment with representation of people of color among those who live in poverty in King County (45%).
- We are building up the infrastructure within BLC to be able to deliver on systems advocacy. We have done this by drafting strategic communication tools that will allow all BLC staff, board and supporters to speak in unison. We anticipate these will begin rolling out to the community in 2021.

2020 Financials

Revenue



Expenses



Save the date:



Every \$1 donated to
BLC secures

\$1.18

In benefits for
people living with
disabilities

ELECTRONIC SERVICE
REQUESTED

2020 Community Partnerships

- Open Door for Multicultural Families
- Enumclaw Community Center
- Georgetown Tiny House Village
- Iraqi Community Center of Washington
- Lavender Rights Project
- Mary's Place
- North Shore Senior Center
- Chief Seattle Club
- Pike Place Commons
- Multi Service Center

Thank you, 2020 Funders



Number of Clients
Served in 2020

1,100+



New Benefits Awarded to
Clients in 2020

\$589,896

Thank you, 2020 Sponsors



Back Pay & Debt Relief
Secured for Clients in 2020

\$591,319

New benefits contributed to
the national economy
monthly in King Co:

\$49,158

so that people with
disabilities can meet their
monthly expenses.

