

2021 Program Outputs: Your Dollars at Work

In 2021, BLC served
750+ people



BLC successfully waived
\$178,826

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

On average, BLC spends \$1350
to help one person navigate
toward economic stability



“ Benefits Law Center
is incredibly
amazing. They were
able to do things I
couldn't. I can't
really find a way to
express the depth
of my gratitude. ”

-BLC Client



"Legal aid is
fundamental to
giving everybody in
this country access
to justice."

-Jeremy Corbyn, Attorney

Photo by Michael Schwartz

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Shari Marion
Tim Moran
Maryann Nelson, Secretary
Jay Stansell

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Alex Doolittle Executive Director	Alex Strout Paralegal
Magdiel Castro Paralegal	Daniel Parker Mobile Attorney
Peter Grieser SSAP Directing Attorney	Kate Means Staff Attorney
Becca Maloney Staff Attorney	Hailey Cassell Development Director
Luwam Gabreselassie Paralegal	Angie M. Lafave Development Director
Marcos Zuniga DHAP Directing Attorney	

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Letter from the Executive Director & Board President

In 2021, the pandemic limited our ability to show up physically to meet with our clients and colleagues. Luckily, we have built strong relationships with community organizations that provide wrap-around services to people living with disabilities.

We bid adieu to several staff who moved on to partner organizations that deliver different types of services to the same population of people, and we have welcomed new advocates into the movement to maintain values-driven and ever-steady delivery civil legal aid. Clients are having to wait longer for a favorable result, because Social Security has been slow to respond to all communications. It has been the most challenging year that BLC has ever seen. .

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, we have seen increased successful outcomes for clients and a big wins for clients who have awaited results for too long. This year has taught us that if you follow President Barack Obama's advice to "show up, dive-in, and stick with it," you absolutely will make an impact. You will make an impact, participate in change, build strong and lasting relationships with your clients and your community, and you will make the world a better place for all of us to live in.

The BLC board of directors has guided BLC through this tumultuous time by shining a light on our values, guiding us to the heart of the matter, and bringing all of us together marching toward a more equitable, stable, and shared future. In 2021 we will be closing out the work on our existing strategic plan, which has helped us build and grow in our anti-racist delivery of service, it has brought us the Justice Bus, and it has resulted in significant growth.

BLC's next chapter is an exciting and bright one! The opportunities available to us as we move back to in-person service delivery and into a new chapter of BLC together. Thank you for your ongoing support of this important mission.

With Gratitude,


Alex KF Doolittle
Executive Director


Abigail Daquiz
Board President



Jay Stansell

2021 Volunteer of the Year



At LOL for BLC in 2018: Jay Stansell and wife, Dori Cahn.

Jay Stansell has served on BLC's board for five years. As an Assistance Federal Public Defender, he initially learned about BLC when he sought our legal team's support to help his mentally ill client gain the social security benefits that he was long denied, in order to survive outside of prison. Jay fostered the relationship between the Public Defender's office and BLC because of the intersection of our work. In his own words, "It's an obvious point but one that I keep learning over and over again: that the legal systems in this country are interconnected, and those in need have very broad legal needs to live the lives they deserve."

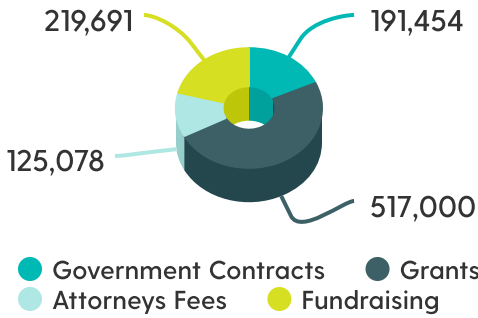
In 2021, Jay also acted as Chair of agency's Fundraising Committee. When he joined that committee, his main motivation was to learn some skills that originally made him uncomfortable – namely asking people for money. Before long, he found his voice, reaching out to family, colleagues, and friends of decades, with unique and emboldened stories about BLC's work, along with broader readings and poetry about the struggle for justice and human dignity in our world. Jay says that "the fundraising work turned into an exercise in connecting with my community, and a way of continuing to examine my own motivations and commitment to BLC work and the larger work of making a better world."

Under Jay and many other talented Board Members' direction, BLC has seen enormous growth in our fundraising capacities, and helped create innovative projects such as the Justice Bus. In 2021 alone, Jay was patient and supportive through the successful changes in our Development team. His consistent contributions as a volunteer have offered significant stability to BLC.

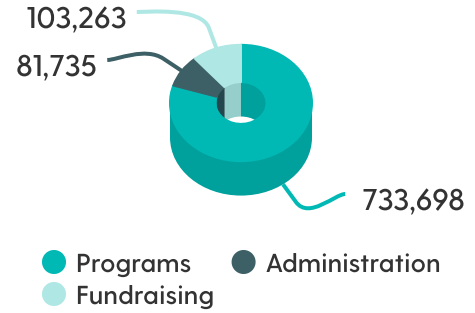
All of this impassioned work and willingness to acquire new skillsets for our benefit has made Jay our volunteer of the year in 2021! We are grateful for his leadership and dedication to BLC.

2021 Financials

Revenue



Expenses



Number of people living in King Co. without a home counted in January of 2021

11,736

In King Co
1 in 3

homeless people live with severe mental or physical disabilities

BLC successfully advocated for

\$178,826

In wrongful debt waived

New Benefits Awarded to Clients in 2021

\$406,284

so that people with disabilities can meet their monthly expenses.

Community Pandemic Response

This year, we continued delivering legal representation to people living with disabilities with pandemic precautions. Our office continued to operate almost entirely remotely for the entire year. Two of the biggest barriers for our clients are telephonic and technology based communications. The limitations placed on community because of the pandemic made 2021 BLC's most challenging year in existence. How do you deliver services and keep everyone safe? People living with disabilities and people who are living without a home were hit hard with health and economic inequities. We did it by relying extremely heavily on our community partners. Housing case managers, community center workers, healthcare workers, and shelter workers simply never went home. This group of people allowed clients to stay safe AND stay connected to other vital services to keep their claims for benefits moving forward.

BLC staff did a great job of being in partnership with dozens of organizations across the State to ensure that BLC clients could access our services even in a pandemic. This type of accountability was done skillfully even with the added pressure of defending against benefit terminations by Social Security. When the pandemic shut down Social Security offices and Social Security workers struggled to engage in customer service remotely.

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, in 2020 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%).

In 2021, BLC continued to analyze the data of our service delivery while also pulling together as a staff and board to do an internal evaluation of how to strengthen our contributions to anti-racism in King County.

2021 Community Partnerships

- Lavender Rights Project
- Mary's Place
- North Shore Senior Center
- Chief Seattle Club
- Pike Place Commons
- NJP
- REACH
- DESC
- NWIRP
- Iraqi Comm. Ctr
- Open Door For Multicultural Families
- SKCCH
- Swedish
- Harborview
- Solid Ground
- Compass Housing
- Team Child

Thank you, 2021 Funders



King County



DOUGLAS
DRACHLER
MCKEE &
GILBROUGH
LLP
ATTORNEYS



beneficial
state bank



town & country
MARKETS

BARRON | SMITH | DAUGERT
ATTORNEYS AT L

Number of Clients Served in 2021

750+



Back Pay & Debt Relief Secured for Clients in 2021

\$745,522

New Benefits Awarded to Clients in 2021

\$406,284

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

\$33,857

so that people with disabilities can meet their monthly expenses.

