



We equip legal advocates, community organizations and the public with cutting-edge tools to identify and address civil justice problems.

AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; TO MAINTAIN LAW AND  
ORDER AND PERPETUATE A ONE HUNDRED PER  
CENT UNION; TO PRESERVE THE MEMORIES AND IN  
HERITANCES OF THE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE GREAT WARS; TO IN  
CREASE THE SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION TO THE COMM



**MARK H. O'BRIEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**LIZ KEITH, PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Against an ever-changing backdrop, our technology has a powerful multiplier effect by enabling pro bono and legal services organizations to empower individuals to protect their rights. From our roots as an online resource for volunteer lawyers in New York, Pro Bono Net is now national in scope and provides web-based tools and resources that support a broad range of legal service delivery models.

Pro Bono Net has always been at the forefront of building innovative technology and partnerships to reach the underserved. Our exciting partnership with Microsoft Corporation and the Legal Services Corporation to develop statewide access to justice portals is just one example. These “justice portals” will help people navigate to the right resources in their state by utilizing innovative technology to identify what resources and services are best-suited.

We have been bringing organizations together to solve shared problems and respond to pressing needs since 1999. The innovative programs and technology we build have changed the landscape of how legal help reaches those in need. Our national network encompasses more than 200 leading civil legal aid programs, immigrants’ rights groups, pro bono initiatives and court innovators.

In the last two years, we have expanded that network, building new partnerships with domestic violence shelters, libraries and senior services agencies that have adopted innovations such as LawHelp Interactive, Citizenshipworks and the Risk Detector, to proactively identify and address the legal needs of vulnerable communities. Few nonprofits in the justice sector, especially those of Pro Bono Net’s size, reach so deeply into the field.

We will continue to expand our influence and develop programs that match the needs of the people we serve. As our role as a catalyst for change continues to grow, we remain grateful to our incredible partners, supporters and team at Pro Bono Net who join with us to make this impact possible.

We’re excited to share a just few examples of how our programs create new capacities within organizations—and on statewide and national levels—to tackle justice problems and provide vital legal resources and assistance to millions of people each year.



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**Pro Bono Net's mission** to increase the capacity of justice organizations to respond to emerging legal needs is more relevant today than ever. We equip legal advocates, community organizations and the public with cutting-edge tools to identify and address civil justice problems. Our programs and collaborations dramatically expand access to justice on a national scale.

# EXPAND ACCESS TO JUSTICE





# PROGRAMS WITH NATIONAL IMPACT

## probono.net

Our flagship program, probono.net, strengthens the traditional lawyer-driven model that allows individuals to exercise their rights on complex issues. Our more than 115,000 membership encompasses legal aid advocates, pro bono attorneys, law students and volunteers committed to ensuring that low-income and vulnerable communities have equal access to justice. Probono.net provides volunteers one-stop access to pro bono opportunities, training materials and practice resources to help attorneys take on cases with confidence, even in unfamiliar areas of the law.



## Immigration Advocates Network

The Immigration Advocates Network (IAN), co-founded by Pro Bono Net with leading immigrants' rights organizations, is now the country's largest network of nonprofit immigration advocates, organizers and service providers with more than 7,000 members. IAN develops collaborative, authoritative and free resources and trainings to increase the capacity of the nonprofit immigration legal sector. IAN also develops award-winning online tools and mobile apps to help immigrants understand their rights and options, and to connect with qualified legal help to protect their future.



## Pro Bono Manager

Pro Bono Manager, a social enterprise venture launched in 2007 with support from the Gates Foundation, offers law firms a customized practice management application to increase the effectiveness and reach of their pro bono programs. Pro Bono Manager has been adopted by nine leading international law firms and is used by thousands of lawyers and paraprofessionals within those firms.



## LawHelp Interactive

LawHelp Interactive (LHI), our national online document assembly platform, serves as the backbone of efforts around the country to use technology to close the justice gap. LHI allows people representing themselves to prepare their own high-quality legal documents and court forms online for free. It is also used by legal aid advocates, pro bono attorneys and court systems seeking to work more efficiently and develop new approaches to service delivery. LawHelp Interactive is active in 40 states. In 2016 alone, more than 529,000 forms were completed using LHI, many for high-stakes issues such as child custody, domestic violence and evictions.





## LawHelp.org

LawHelp.org, our network of statewide legal information portals in 25 states, helps low-income individuals learn about their legal rights, access self-advocacy tools and find trusted legal aid programs in their local area. An average of more than 20,000 people use the LawHelp network's resources each day to find solutions to their legal issues in areas such as preserving family stability, maintaining suitable housing and overcoming debt. LawHelp.org was developed and is maintained by Pro Bono Net in partnership with hundreds of nonprofit legal aid, pro bono, court-based programs and community organizations across the country.

# LawHelp.org



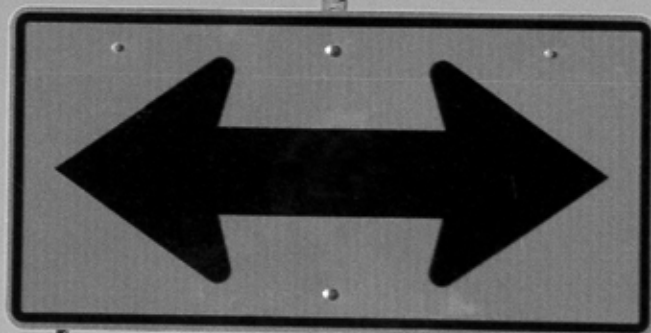
## Our technology promotes legal empowerment

New online legal forms from groups like LawHelp Interactive allow people to fill out forms without having to understand the law. The software interviews them with plain English questions, and then completes the forms in the language required by the court.

LawHelp Interactive was highlighted in a 2016 *New York Times* piece, "A Year of Big Ideas in Social Change," by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tina Rosenberg:

Another example [of using tech to democratize] is civil legal aid. Even though people involved in civil cases can lose their apartments, their children and their jobs, the law does not guarantee them the services of a lawyer. In fact, it's very difficult for low-income Americans to get one.

Many states are now considering laws that would make counsel a right in civil cases. Until that happens, we need other ways to get legal help to self-represented people.



## > CLOSING the GAP <

“Jordan was so good, the ‘judge’ in my little town had to look up all of the cases he cited in my answer and counterclaim. He hit it out of the ball park! Thanks so much.”—Melissa

### Jordan Chisolm, Esq., Pro Bono Advocate, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York

When Melissa\* faced a retaliatory eviction from her landlord, she was in serious need of a lawyer. Only one problem: Melissa lived in rural New York and didn't have the ability to physically get to a legal aid organization even though she qualified for assistance. For low-income rural residents, getting to a location where they can access legal assistance is a challenge. The time and money it takes to travel is a hindrance, and for those without their own mode of transportation it can be impossible.

This is precisely why Pro Bono Net developed the Closing the Gap program, to connect rural residents with pro bono attorneys remotely. With partners such as Legal Aid Society of Northeastern

New York (LASNNY), Legal Assistance of Western New York (LawNY), and Volunteer Legal Services Project (VLSP), Closing the Gap uses real-time web video chat, client collaboration tools, and remote review of documents and generation of pleadings through LawHelp Interactive to connect volunteers like Jordan Chisolm to clients like Melissa.

Jordan is a volunteer with the Closing the Gap program at LASNNY. He was able to connect with Melissa remotely and help her with her situation. After interviewing her through the program, Jordan immediately identified several discrepancies in the lawsuit by the landlord. He was able to prepare a solid defense

to argue against the proceedings for her, and the eviction was dismissed by the courts. Melissa and her landlord were able to come to a mutual agreement and resolve the issue. Without Jordan's help Melissa may have lost her home, a devastating prospect to low-income residents. Instead, she is still happily living in her home, free from further housing or habitability issues.

The Closing the Gap program provided the means for Melissa to receive assistance, and for LASNNY to ensure that those without the ability to get to their offices still have access to the legal assistance they need.

# PERSONAL IMPACT

\*Name has been changed



NEW INITIATIVES  
EMPOWER THE  
PUBLIC WITH  
SELF-ADVOCACY  
TOOLS





## Documenting LawHelp Interactive's Impact

In 2015, the Michigan Poverty Law Program, a leading LawHelp Interactive partner, published an evaluation of the effectiveness of MichiganLegalHelp.org in helping self-represented litigants successfully navigate the divorce process. The study found that litigants who used LHI-powered pro se divorce forms available on MichiganLegalHelp.org concluded their cases faster than other self-represented individuals, and faster than those who used lawyers. This was true even when controlling for the complexity of the case.





## Expanding LawHelp Innovations

In 2015, we welcomed Puerto Rico to the LawHelp network. AyudaLegalPR.org, launched entirely in Spanish, promotes legal empowerment among low-income and vulnerable communities and increases community engagement with the legal sector and governmental institutions in Puerto Rico. AyudaLegalPR.org engages in innovative outreach activities designed to promote the effective use of technology as an access to justice tool, including “Open Legal Workshops,” an activity to “bring ayudalegalpr.org to life” by combining a free workshop on a particular legal topic with a tutorial on how to access and use the website using tablets and cellphones. In most of these activities, pro bono lawyers offer free consultation and support.

In a new chapter for Pro Bono Net during 2016, we assumed management and operations of the LawHelpNY initiative, the first LawHelp site to launch in 2000. As a result of this transition, we are in an even stronger position to promote access to legal assistance in New York State, and to work with the remaining 11 LawHelpNY Consortium members to advance innovative and

collaborative models for expanding legal solutions for low-income individuals and the organizations that service them.

LawHelpNY’s LiveHelp program, one of the most successful in the country, expanded last year in a first-in-the-nation collaboration with the courts. LiveHelp, which is staffed primarily by trained law student volunteers, is now available on key areas of the New York State Courts CourtHelp website. The enhanced service helps visitors to both the LawHelpNY and CourtHelp websites to find relevant legal rights and information, and learn what resources each site offers to individuals who are representing themselves in court.

“We believe that for individuals going to court on their own who face the very real prospect of losing their home, having the ability to make a connection with an individual who can help, even if it’s in some small way, pointing them to resources or information, can have a significant impact.” —**Rochelle Klempner, Chief Counsel, New York State Courts Access to Justice Program**





“I was skeptical when coming on your site, but after having spoken with John my outlook changed. I was given so many options and information to read that would be of help to me, and I am so grateful to have gotten that operator. Keep up the good work. If I had to rate based from my experience, I would give 10 for excellent customer service and information. Thanks for this site. I will most definitely recommend it to my friends.” —Rebecca

### LawHelpNY's LiveHelp Program

When Rebecca\* struggled to get her landlord to make repairs to the apartment she shares with her grandmother in Brooklyn, she filed a complaint with New York City's Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). After inspecting the situation, HPD issued a violation against the landlord. In retribution, the landlord began harassing Rebecca. Rebecca called the police several times, but no arrests were made. Rebecca felt helpless.

In New York City, 54% of low-income households spend more than half their incomes on rent. Finding and keeping affordable housing is a constant struggle for many. While it is illegal for building owners to force their tenants to leave their apartments or surrender their rights, landlords will often resort to harassment to pressure low-income tenants to move out, particularly if they are prone to reporting violations. Losing housing can create a snowball effect for low-income New Yorkers, leading to homelessness and

a cycle of debt and poverty that becomes difficult to escape. Legal assistance and self-help resources can be instrumental in combatting threats and harassment by unscrupulous landlords and keeping people in their homes.

Luckily, Rebecca found LawHelpNY.org, New York's leading online tool for helping low-income New Yorkers solve their legal problems. LawHelpNY's LiveHelp program connects visitors to a trained volunteer, supervised by an attorney, to help them find legal information, self-help tools and referrals.

Clicking on the LiveHelp icon, Rebecca was immediately connected to LiveHelp operator John, who is one of LawHelpNY's law student volunteers. After hearing about her situation, John began looking through the LawHelpNY directory to find an organization that could help. After referring her to the Legal Aid Society for legal assistance, he provided links to legal

information and self-help guides about obtaining an order of protection from the LawHelpNY site, along with details on hotlines she could call if the Legal Aid Society was unable to help. In addition to her above comments in the exit survey, Rebecca expressed to John her gratitude: “You have been extremely helpful. You have gone above and beyond what anyone has done or what I hoped to have gotten from this session. You rock!”

Rebecca, like so many who come to LawHelpNY.org, faced a difficult and trying situation. “These issues can be overwhelming, which is why we provide direct connections to trained legal volunteers to help them navigate the wealth of information on LawHelpNY.org and find referrals to organizations that can help,” says Michelle Born, Esq., Training and Outreach Manager. With some guidance and direction, Rebecca was on her way to solving her legal problem.

# PERSONAL IMPACT

\*Name has been changed



# STRENGTHENING PRO BONO PARTICIPATION





## Addressing Voting Rights and Veterans' Needs

In the last two years, the probono.net network expanded to include leading national voting rights and veterans assistance organizations. VotingRightsInstitute.org—developed with two leading voting rights organizations, the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy and the Campaign Legal Center—helps attorneys, expert witnesses and law students combat voting rights violations and equips the public with information to protect their right to vote. It also provides updates on events, publications and other resources to elevate public awareness of voter identification laws and voter registration restrictions.

Pro Bono Net and The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program collaborated to create vetsprobono.org, a new website to support and engage both veterans and volunteer attorneys. The new site leverages the probono.net technology platform, which is used to support broad-based networks of legal aid, civil rights and pro bono lawyers across the country. The site offers veterans and their families information about appealing unfavorable VA benefits decisions, including informational videos and frequently asked questions. The site also includes an interactive interview to generate an informal brief hosted on LawHelp Interactive (LHI's)

platform. The brief can be used by appellants in U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court) who have received a denial of VA benefits by the Board of Veterans' appeals. Through LHI and its Connect feature, appellants answer LHI interview questions in the user-friendly A2J Author interface and then are able to easily share their answers with The Veterans Consortium (TVC) staff for review before filing them with the Court.

The new web platform delivers a winning “trifecta” solution: making it easier for veterans to file federal court appeals, making it more efficient for attorneys to volunteer and ask for cases to represent veterans in need, and making it more effective for TVC staff attorneys to carefully match the right client with the best volunteer.

“This new web platform is a leap ahead for our staff and dedicated volunteers, and helps us live our credo that our veterans in need, our nation’s defenders, deserve the benefits and compensation they were promised, and the best legal services free of charge, to meet their challenges. We couldn’t have accomplished this rapid increase in capability and capacity without our outstanding high-tech and mission-driven partner Pro Bono Net.”—**Ed Glabus, Executive Director of The Veterans Consortium**



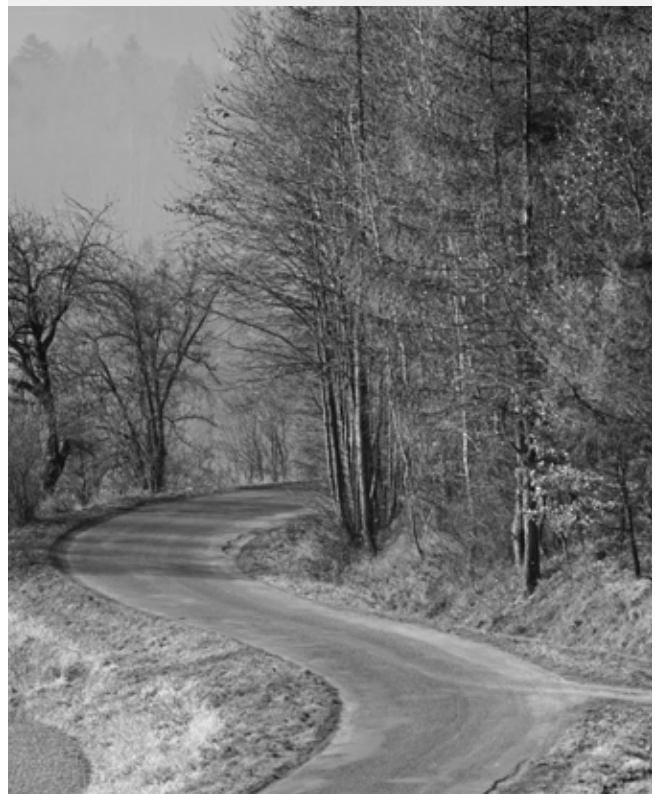


## Expanding Pro Bono Assistance on Expungement Matters in Oklahoma

In partnership with Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma (LASO), we launched an innovative pro bono effort to expand the availability of pro bono assistance in expungement matters, which affects one of every 12 adults in Oklahoma. Individuals seeking an expungement can complete a guided online interview on LawHelp Interactive to help determine if they qualify for expungement. Using a new suite of LawHelp Interactive tools called LHI Connect, LASO pro bono coordinators then share information collected online from qualifying individuals with volunteer attorneys, who remotely review the client information and create the necessary forms and instructions from within the LawHelp Interactive platform. The technology facilitates the screening and intake process, makes it possible to generate high-quality pro se forms, and supports the provision of remote and limited-scope services to individuals seeking expungement who otherwise might not be reached. LHI Connect was developed with funding from Legal Services Corporation's (LSC's) Technology Initiative Grant program, and is now available for other legal aid programs across the country to use in other pro bono initiatives.

## Closing the Rural-Urban Pro Bono Divide

Since our founding, Pro Bono Net has pioneered the use of technology to expand access to legal assistance in rural areas. In 2016, we launched Closing the Gap ([www.closingthegapny.org](http://www.closingthegapny.org)), a new virtual legal services initiative, in partnership with the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York and Legal Assistance of Western New York, to increase pro bono assistance to rural and isolated communities on housing and consumer issues. Developed with a pilot grant from the LSC Pro Bono Innovation Fund, the platform links urban volunteer lawyers with rural clients through remote assistance technology and collaboration tools, including real-time video, remote document sharing and remote generation of pro se pleadings through LawHelp Interactive. By using attorneys concentrated in metropolitan areas, Closing the Gap can unlock a much larger pool of volunteers than is currently available in rural regions and lower the overall cost of delivering services to communities that are traditionally difficult to reach.





FORGING  
GROUNDBREAKING  
COLLABORATIONS

## New Justice Portal Initiative

Pro Bono Net's work to promote new collaborative approaches to close the justice gap recently got a huge boost. At the 2016 White House Access to Justice Summit, Pro Bono Net, Microsoft and the Legal Service Corporation announced a new partnership to develop statewide "justice portals" to help people navigate to the right resources in their state. Pilot initiatives in Alaska and Hawaii will integrate and amplify existing efforts by legal aid organizations, courts and other service providers to help more people facing eviction, domestic violence and other civil law issues. Alaska and Hawaii were selected

because of their track records in establishing new and collaborative resources for meeting civil legal needs; their embrace of technology's potential to expand access to legal assistance; and their vision of partnering with allied non-legal networks to help people identify and resolve their legal issues. Over the next year, we will work with Microsoft, LSC and the pilot jurisdictions to implement cutting-edge user-centered solutions with the goal of ensuring that every individual who cannot afford a lawyer is able to obtain some form of effective assistance for their issue.







## Building Early Intervention Partnerships

Pro Bono Net continued our work advancing new partnership models with nontraditional justice actors that complement the work of the legal aid community. This is an area that is relatively unexplored within the legal aid field, outside of the medical-legal arena, yet technology holds great promise for supporting legal issue-spotting and referral activities by lay advocate and non-legal community navigators. In 2016, we introduced the Legal Risk Detector, a new tablet-based app used by social workers in New York City and Buffalo, New York, to conduct “legal health check-ups” for the homebound elderly on consumer debt, eviction and financial exploitation issues, and to facilitate access to direct

services for issues identified. Originally developed in 2014, in partnership with JASA of Legal Services for the Elderly in Queens and Georgetown University Law Center, the web app uses Neota Logic technology to provide a user-friendly, conversational interface to help social workers ask the right questions and identify red flags. It also allows room for notes and observations to facilitate follow-up if a legal issue is identified. The Legal Risk Detector was developed to be readily adapted by other organizations to expand the availability of preventative and holistic legal services for communities that are difficult to reach through traditional on-site legal services.





HELPING IMMIGRANTS  
PROTECT  
THEIR FUTURE



## Supporting Immigrants from Green Card to Citizenship

In June 2015, the Immigration Advocates Network released a new Citizenshipworks platform, ensuring that the nearly nine million immigrants who are eligible to naturalize in the United States have a free online option that provides a safe and simple journey from green card to citizenship. Citizenshipworks—available in English and Spanish—helps legal permanent residents (green card holders) navigate the naturalization process step by step, and can connect them to online or in-person legal help through a national network of nonprofit legal service providers. A companion mobile app, available

in English, Spanish and Chinese, includes quizzes, flash cards and other tools and helps immigrants prepare for the citizenship tests with information about local legal assistance, financial resources and more.

“Our organization has come to rely on Citizenshipworks as its preferred method for providing efficient, client-centered assistance with adequate legal safeguards,” said Randy McGrorty, executive director of Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami. “It has not only transformed the way we process applications for citizenship at CLS, it has changed how we think about the process itself.”

## Helping All Immigrants Understand their Legal Options

In November of 2016, in the face of tumultuous election results, the Immigration Advocates Network launched an ambitious new platform, [immi.org](http://immi.org), to help immigrants in the US understand their legal rights and options and find assistance from a network of trusted nonprofit service providers. Studies estimate that about 1.5 million undocumented immigrants have a right, under existing U.S. law, to stay in the United States, but many of those who qualify for forms of relief aren't aware of their options or need information to get started. Immi includes an in-depth online screening tool with individualized results for family-based immigration, asylum, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and more, as well as know your rights resources and a search tool to help immigrants find local nonprofit legal assistance. Immi's launch garnered extensive coverage in Immigration Advocates Network (IAN) partner networks, mainstream and ethnic media and social media.



## New Resources for Immigrant Women

[WomenStepForward.org](http://WomenStepForward.org), launched on International Women's Day in 2016, helps the estimated 5.2 million undocumented immigrant women living in the U.S. to understand their rights and connect with legal resources. Developed by We Belong Together and the Immigration Advocates Network (IAN), in partnership with the National Domestic Workers Alliance, Pro Bono Net, and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, Step Forward provides immigrant women with plain language legal resources to help undocumented women assess whether they might qualify for various forms of immigration relief; targeted referrals to trusted nonprofit legal service providers, so individuals can access help and avoid fraud or misinformation; and resources for crime victims and survivors of abuse.

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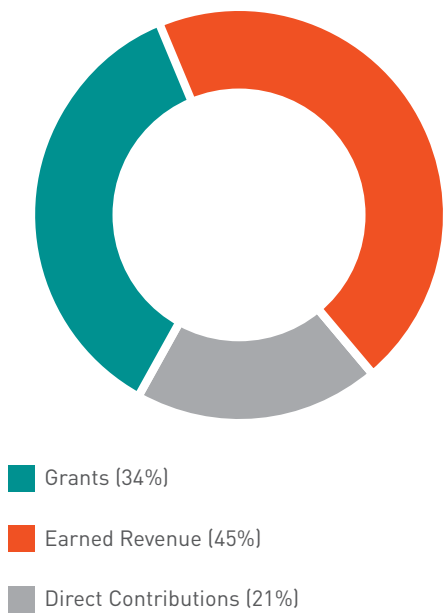
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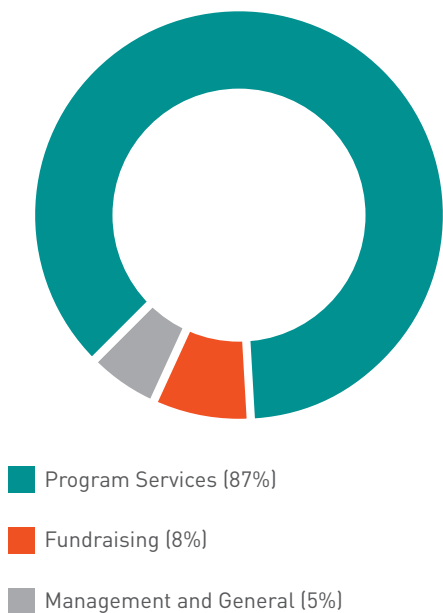
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Stephen Warnke & Susan Sommer

# FINANCIALS

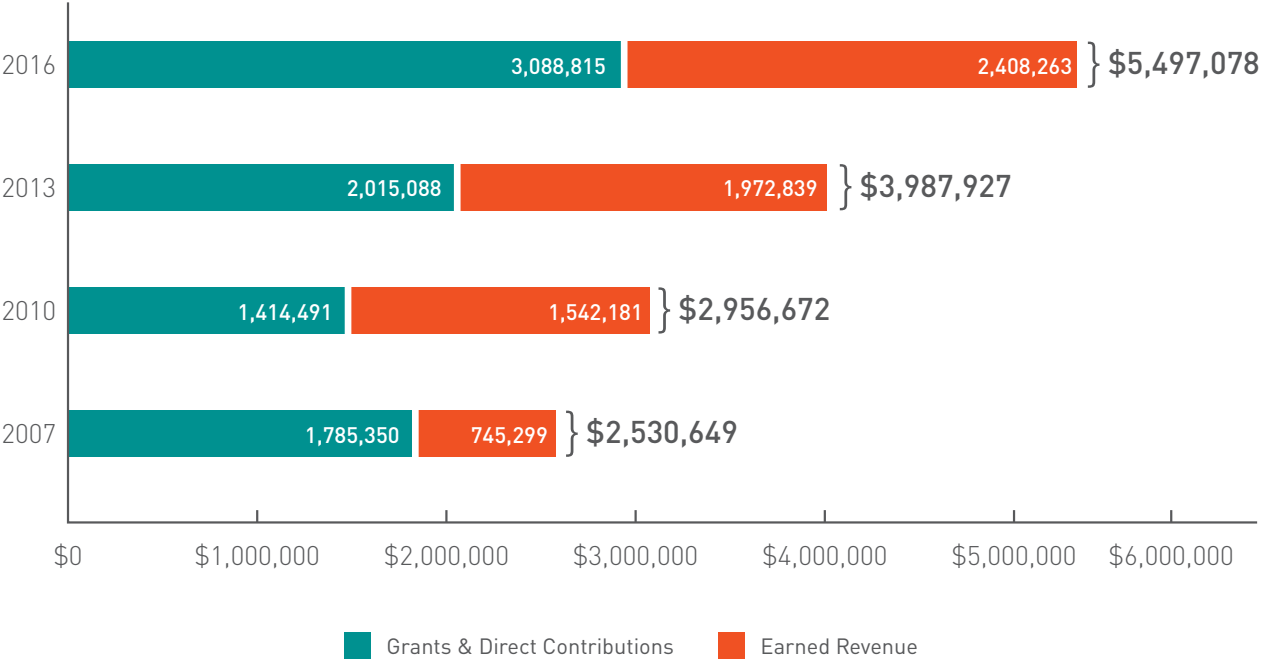
Income Distribution



Expenses



Grants and Direct Contributions/Earned Revenue

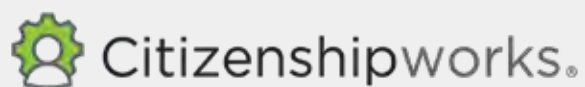




# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the Year Ending December 31, 2016

|                                      | 2016             |                        |                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
|                                      | Unrestricted     | Temporarily Restricted | Total              |
| <b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>           |                  |                        |                    |
| Contributions                        | \$1,726,192      | \$768,725              | \$2,494,917        |
| Donated software                     | 7,387            |                        | 7,387              |
| Donated goods and services           | 514,108          |                        | 514,108            |
| Interest and other income            | 72,403           |                        | 72,403             |
| Program fees                         | 2,092,297        |                        | 2,092,297          |
| Product subscription fees            | 315,966          |                        | 315,966            |
| Net assets released from restriction | 1,274,292        | (1,274,292)            | -                  |
| <b>Total support and revenue</b>     | <b>6,002,645</b> | <b>(505,567)</b>       | <b>5,497,078</b>   |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                      |                  |                        |                    |
| Program services                     | 5,196,953        |                        | 5,196,953          |
| Management and general               | 324,812          |                        | 324,812            |
| Fundraising                          | 450,309          |                        | 450,309            |
| <b>Total expenses</b>                | <b>5,972,074</b> | <b>0</b>               | <b>5,972,074</b>   |
| <b>NET ASSETS</b>                    |                  |                        |                    |
| Beginning                            | 30,571           | (505,567)              | (474,996)          |
| Change in net assets                 | 686,142          | 1,274,291              | 1,960,433          |
| <b>Ending</b>                        | <b>\$716,713</b> | <b>\$768,724</b>       | <b>\$1,485,437</b> |



Immigration Advocates  
NETWORK

