

AUSTIN COMMUNITY LAW CENTER

2019 MID-YEAR REPORT

January 1 – July 28, 2019



Law



Community



Justice

www.AustinCommunityLawCenter.org

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Austin Community Law Center
2019 Mid-Year Report

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Every day, families fear losing their homes; children fear losing a parent to jail; and parents fear losing children to divorce. They deserve robust legal protection. ACLC makes quality legal representation available to families who would not otherwise have access to it.

Mission

Austin Community Law Center is a nonprofit law firm. Our mission is to make legal representation radically more affordable, invest in a stronger community, and fight for justice.

Vision

Our vision is a world where a person’s ability to meet their needs is not dictated by their wealth; where everyone is safe at home, work, and school; and everyone can count on justice in the courts.

Message from the Executive Director

The Austin Community Law Center is a nonprofit law firm. Our mission is to make legal representation radically more affordable, invest in a stronger community, and fight for justice.

Our staff has grown significantly since last year, which lets us help more people more quickly. **From January 1, 2018 to July 28, 2019, we saved our clients \$233,984.93 in legal fees** compared to what they would have paid at market rates. We also expanded our Family Security Legal Clinics, and engaged in reform litigation and advocacy on multiple fronts.

Excitingly, we received funding for an **Academy for Civil Engagement** that will launch later this year. ACE will educate community members about civic engagement, especially those who have not been civically engaged in the past. Participants will learn to use collective power to influence local government to make policies and allocate resources in ways that benefit historically underserved constituencies.

But we can't do it without you. This year we began a base of sustaining donors through the [Friends of ACLC](#). Your support is critical for continuing and expanding our work.

Sincerely,

Brian McGiverin

Brian McGiverin
Executive Director and Attorney



Brian McGiverin

Board of Directors

Aaron Johnson
Board President

Tracey Whitley
Board Vice President

Nikhita Ved
Board Secretary

Our Team



Brian McGiverin. Executive Director

Brian McGiverin is a long-time civil rights attorney with both nonprofit and private sector firms. He founded the Austin Community Law Center after experience being a partner with Dietz, Lawrence & McGiverin; a staff attorney with the Texas Civil Rights Project; and as a policy aide for Austin City Council Member Delia Garza.



Amy Kamp. Paralegal and Legal Clinic Organizer

Amy has a BA from the University of Texas and a JD from the University of Oklahoma. She has worked as a journalist for the Austin Chronicle, where she covered local politics, focusing especially on labor issues, and as a community organizer for Fight for 15 Texas. She is the proud guardian of two extremely rambunctious dogs and one very laid-back cat



Lety Montoya. Paralegal

Born and raised in Georgetown, TX, Leticia, Lety, left her hometown near Austin to a smaller town for her university studies. Living in the oldest town in Texas, Nacogdoches, she received her Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and French with a Minor in Communication. Coming back to her home city she is quite determined to help her community and see Texas move forward. She is also excited to work for ACLC and progress her career by attending law school in the future.



Marissa Jeffery. Law Clerk

Marissa is a dual degree graduate student at the University of Texas in law and public affairs. Prior to graduate school, she was a middle school English teacher with Teach for America. She is passionate about the intersections between health equity, domestic violence, and reproductive justice. She is excited to be working at ACLC and broadening her knowledge of family law



Nina Hernandez. Paralegal

Nina Hernandez was born and raised in Austin, Texas. She graduated from the University of Texas with a Bachelor of Journalism, and spent six years working for The Austin Chronicle, where she wrote about music, film, and local politics. In 2019, she left journalism to pursue a career in politics. When she's not working, she is mangling songs at karaoke, sharing horror stories at Greetings from Queer Mountain, and wrangling her two rambunctious pups.



Linzy Scott. Law Clerk

Linzy is a 2L at the University of Texas School of Law. Before attending law school he attended Vanderbilt University where he majored in English and Political Science. He is primarily interested in civil rights and immigration law. He is looking forward to working at ACLC and gaining more experience in the practice of law. He also loves cooking, watching the Atlanta Hawks, and reading.

Wrapping up 2018



In 2018, after we published our 2018 Mid-Year Report, we held ACLC's First Annual Rock Gala on September 29, 2018. It was a huge success.

We raised over \$5,000 selling tickets and with our silent auction.



Neesha Davé

We presented awards to Neesha Davé, Ruby Roa, and Chris Harris.



Ruby Roa

Further, the City of Austin proclaimed September 29, 2018 to be "Austin Community Law Center Recognition Day."



Chris Harris

We capped the year by the release of our **2019-2020 Strategic Plan**, which outlines our plan for long-term growth through building a sustaining donor base: the "Friends of ACLC."

Affordable Legal Services

From January 1, 2018 to July 28, 2019, ACLC's sliding scale fees saved clients a total of **\$233,984.93**.

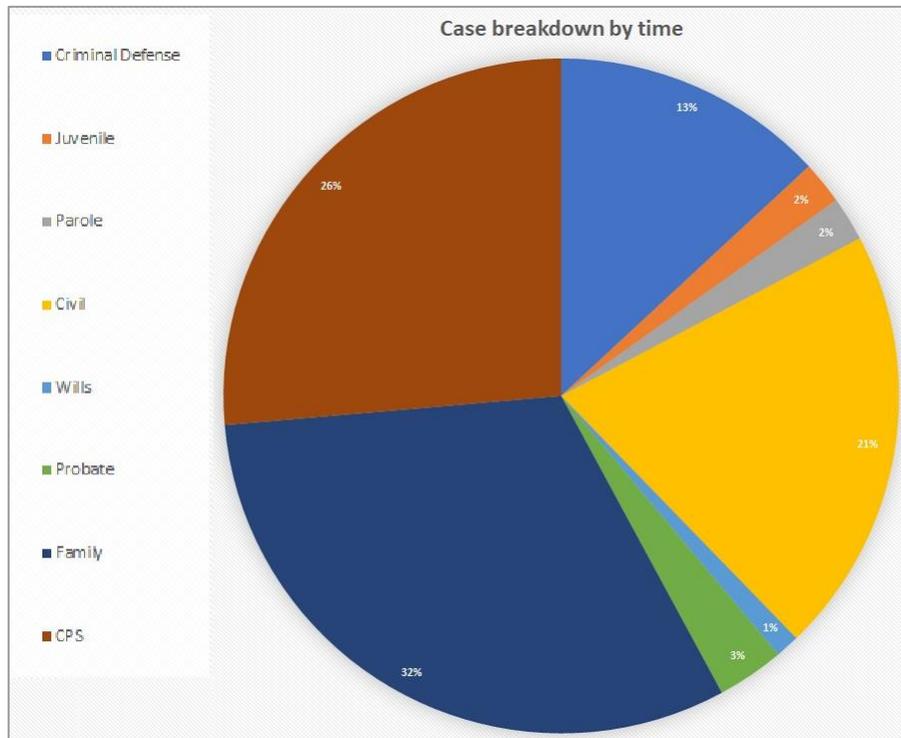
Your income:	Below 125% FPG	125% - 200% FPG	200% - 300% FPG	300% - 400% FPG
Your fee:	\$75/hour	\$100/hour	\$125/hour	\$150/hour

ACLC provides access to justice for clients who face challenges to securing legal representation.

Many of our clients are below 125% the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG), and would be income-eligible for free legal services from a legal aid organization, but made ineligible by case type or their immigration status.

We also serve clients with household income up to 400% of FPG, who are not income-eligible for free services from legal aid but would struggle to pay market-rate attorney's fees. They fall into a "services gap" that ACLC bridges by offering with sliding-scale fees.

We focus on handling the types of cases that impact most families, including family law, criminal defense, tenant rights, civil litigation, and wills and probate.



Investing in a Stronger Community

Family Security Legal Clinics

Since 2017, the Austin Community Law Center has collaborated with social workers at AISD campuses to host legal clinics for the parents of school-aged children. In April 2018, ACLC received a \$5,000 grant from the Austin Bar Foundation to increase the frequency of our legal clinics in order to serve more families.

We are improving families' security by executing wills, powers of attorney, advanced designations of guardianship, and authorizations for nonparent adult caregivers. Most low-income families don't have these important documents in place, and there are few resources to help satisfy the need.

The legal clinic model leverages volunteers to offer thousands of dollars in value to each family served.



Burnet Middle School



Webb Middle School



Grassroots Leadership

Our next step is to expand our clinics to address a wider set of needs for clients' financial security, such as recovering rental security deposits. These legal services shore up families' financial foundation, which helps them go on to secure other basic needs such as childcare, food, shelter, and education supports.

Fighting for Justice

Litigation and Advocacy



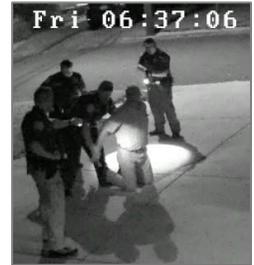
In late 2018, ACLC was proud to be part of a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Driver Responsibility Program, and we are pleased that the Texas Legislature finally chose to end it.

The draconian program ensnared drivers in a seemingly endless cycle of exorbitant annual fees for past traffic offenses, and caused nearly 1.5 million Texans to have their licenses suspended.

As of September 1, 2019 it was terminated by the Legislature, with pending surcharges waived.



We also continue to challenge police misconduct. This summer we filed a lawsuit on behalf of Breanna Williams against APD officers who threw her into the back of a squad car while handcuffed; her face struck the seat belt receiver, causing a large laceration above her eye.



We also filed a lawsuit for Jim Templeton against APD officers. Although they met him during a mental health call, the officers approached our client from concealment, held him at gunpoint, and violently wrenched his shoulder during handcuffing, causing him severe injury.

Human Rights Framework Regarding Austin Police Department Mental Health-Related Shootings

University of Texas School of Law Human Rights Clinic and the Austin Community Law Center



HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC



AUSTIN COMMUNITY LAW CENTER

Relatedly, late this year we released a human rights report in partnership with the UT School of Law Human Rights Clinic. It explains that Austin is violating international human rights laws by having the highest per capita rate of police shootings during mental health calls among the 15 largest cities in the United States.

The report recommended that APD train officers to increase their awareness of people with psychosocial disabilities; and how to make meaningful attempts at de-escalation. Further, it recommends

that officers who do not comply with use of force policies face meaningful disciplinary sanctions. Finally, the report encourages the City to improve community services for those with psychosocial disabilities to the reduce the frequency with which they come into contact with the police.

ACLC also played a small supporting role in the debate about creating a public defender's office in Travis County.

