

It may take years (likely decades) to fully understand the events of 2020, but one thing is certain - never has the work of Legal Aid Society been more relevant to the lives and livelihoods of Kentuckians. Justice has been at the center of our collective consciousness. From conversations about racial equity to access to unemployment benefits. This year has made manifest the importance and real impact of “justice for all.” **It is not just an idea, a value, or our professional pursuit; “justice,” in the lives of our clients, has real consequences. It means food on the table, a roof over one’s head, or even life itself.**

2020 IN NUMBERS

Cases	Clients	Community
6,788 Total Cases	5,924 Unique Clients	37,000+ Reached through Facebook
4,169 Cases Closed	6,126 Children Impacted	15,000 Unique Visitors to our Website
1,222 Volunteer Cases	1,693 Domestic Violence Survivors	600 Donors Supporting our Work
1,495 Housing Cases	926 Seniors	400 Volunteers joining Together Lawyers Can
750 Protective Order Cases	239 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness	4 Continuing Legal Education Presentations
1,870 Family Law Cases**	319 Veterans	1 Statewide COVID Legal Hot-line Launched
990 Expungement Cases	94 People Living with HIV/AIDS	
896 Income Related Cases*		

* Includes government benefit cases, consumer cases, and tax related cases.
** Includes divorce and custody and visitation cases.
Data as of December 8, 2020.

THIS IS WHAT EQUAL JUSTICE LOOKS LIKE

Behind every case is a real person and their story. People like “Travis” who was referred to Legal Aid Society’s HIV/AIDS Legal Project in the fall of 2019. Travis is HIV+ and living with mental health issues that make it impossible for him to work. In March of 2019, the Social Security Administration declared that Travis was no longer disabled and discontinued his disability payments. When he came to Legal Aid, Travis had a hard time explaining what had happened – he had lost his medical coverage, he was struggling to make ends meet, and he was in mental distress.

With just a month to prepare for an administrative hearing Travis’ Legal Aid attorney went to work. Travis had received disability in 2012 for a reason unrelated to his mental health. While this prior condition had improve, his mental health had worsened. Even so, Travis only had emergency room records with brief admissions regarding his mental health and he appeared young and physically healthy. With these facts and his lack of current health insurance, Travis’ attorney knew it would be challenging to prove to the Social Security Administration that Travis was still disabled. However, Travis’ attorney also knew that Travis could not work and that this final appeal would be his best hope.

At the hearing, the judge appeared to struggle with Travis’ case. He was able to question Travis and could see that he had mental

issues but did not have a solid foundation of medical records to make a judgment. Travis’ attorney argued that a neuropsychological evaluation would be helpful, but noted that there had not been time before the hearing to obtain one and that Travis did not have health insurance to cover the cost of the exam. The Judge agreed, and decided to hold the case open so Travis could receive the evaluation.

And then came COVID-19. The pandemic forced the cancellation of Travis’ evaluation. To make matters worse, Travis, who had obtained health insurance in January 2020, could not find a provider who would accept his new insurance. His attorney made repeated requests to the Judge keep the case open until Travis could find someone to conduct the evaluation.

Finally, in August of 2020, Travis was able to complete a neuropsychological evaluation and the results supported Travis’ case. For over a year, Travis had no income, his mental health was deteriorating at a rapid pace, and he became mute. But with the help of his Legal Aid attorney, this December, the Social Security Administration found Travis to be disabled, reinstated his disability payments, and provided back payments that he was owed.

For Travis, civil legal aid saved his income, his health, and restored his hope. This is what equal justice looks like.