

CENTRO LEGAL

Annual Report
2006-2007



The mission of Centro Legal is to provide professional, affordable legal representation to Milwaukee County's working poor who face legal difficulties in family law and misdemeanor criminal matters.

Report to the Community

Letter from the Director

CENTROLEGAL

Dear Friends and Supporters of Centro Legal,

It has been a year of solid and continuing growth for Centro Legal.

The five attorneys and two case managers who make up our program staff continue to deliver high-quality litigation representation in the Family law and Misdemeanor defense service areas where in-court help is most needed in Milwaukee County.

While our clients continue to support about half our cost of delivering in-court litigation services with low, accessible client contributions, the community has stepped up as well. In 2005, the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation (WisTAF) provided \$3000 in financial assistance. In 2006, this was increased to \$42,000, and we have been granted \$90,000 in 2007. Local foundations continue to support our mission, and our annual campaign in 2006 netted \$20,000 in donations mostly from local attorneys.

Earlier this year the State Bar of Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Bar Association and WisTAF adopted the Wisconsin Legal Needs Study and all of its recommendations. The State Bar will likely petition the Supreme Court later this year for the creation of an Access to Justice Commission. If created, the Commission will look at legal services needed in Wisconsin and how they can be better delivered and funded. We at Centro Legal look forward to working with providers, funders, the courts, and the law schools as we attempt to design a service delivery system that truly meets Wisconsin's low-income legal service needs.

Sincerely,
Chris Ford



2006-07 Board of Directors

Richard Gallun, President

Eduardo Borda

Domingo G. Cruz

Richard Glaisner

Beatriz Gonzalez

David Irwin

Thomas Klein

Thomas Klein

Martin Kohler

Harvey Kurtz

Larry Salustro

Mary Scheibel

Herzl Spiro

Daniel Vaccaro

2006 Achievements

In 2006, we improved our internal operations to serve our clients with greater ease and efficiency.

- Increased attorney staff to five, two case managers, and a bookkeeper, allowing us to improve our case capacity
- Installed a case management and billing system, which allows us to generate timely and accurate outcomes
- Strengthened our Board of Directors
- Hired a fund development manager to better attract and maintain our community support efforts

Our Clients

As a single mother of three, full-time employee, and student, Tracy was an active individual. So when she was criminally charged with neglect of a child and threatened with losing her children, she was devastated. To complicate her frustration, Tracy could not afford an attorney and did not qualify for a public defender.

Tracy turned to Centro Legal. Her attorney investigated the facts, interviewed witnesses, and after trying to reach a resolution, set a trial date. Fortunately, Tracy's attorney was bilingual and was able to interview a Spanish-speaking witness personally. Further investigation by the Centro Legal attorney determined that the police report had attributed certain statements to the witness that were incorrect. It was then discovered that the interviewing officer did not speak Spanish and had recorded the statement incorrectly.

On the day of the trial, the Centro Legal attorney resolved the misunderstanding, and the district attorney dismissed the charges against Tracy. She left court that day with a clear record and faced no threat of losing her children.

Our Services

Family Law:

This includes Divorce, Spousal Support, Child Support/Visitation. Approximately 75% of our clients in this area are women, most with children, and almost half are experiencing domestic violence.

Misdemeanor Criminal Defense:

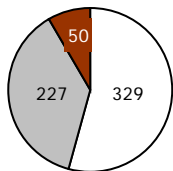
This includes OWI and Disorderly Conduct. We work to eliminate unnecessary confinement time and preserve employment.

Guardian ad Litem:

This includes Underage Paternity representation and Children in Contested Custody. In this area, our attorneys are appointed by the Milwaukee County Courts.

2006 Outcomes

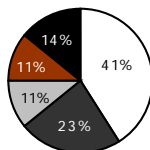
2006 Cases Concluded



- Family Law
- Misdemeanor
- Guardian ad Litem

The average family law case involves 2.8 hearings, 2.7 office visits, and 3.8 file documents.

Our Funding Sources

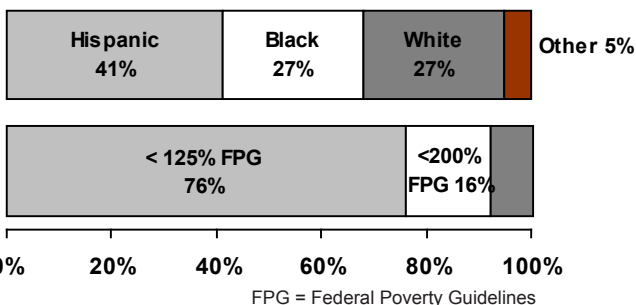


- Client Payments
- Foundations
- WisTAF*
- Guardian ad Litem Appointments
- Individual Contributions

* Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation

The average misdemeanor case involves 3.6 hearings and 1.7 office visits.

Overview of our Clients



We wish to highlight the local foundations who have generously supported us throughout the year:

- Helen Bader Foundation
- Forest County Potawatomi Community Foundation
- Walter R. Gustin Revocable Trust
- Richard and Ethel Herzfeld Foundation
- Northwestern Mutual Foundation
- Weiss Family Foundation
- Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation

Help Us Help Others

You can support Centro Legal and its clients by making a tax-deductible contribution on-line at www.centrolegalwisconsin.org or by sending a check to:

Centro Legal
1711 S 11th St
Milwaukee, WI 53204

For more information about Centro Legal, visit our website or call us at 414-384-7900.