



Fresh Starts *and Second Chances*

Volunteer Lawyers Network
uses the power of volunteers
to protect and enforce the
legal rights of low-income
Minnesotans.



annual report
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015



Fresh Starts *and Second Chances*

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Your pro bono commitment changes real lives.

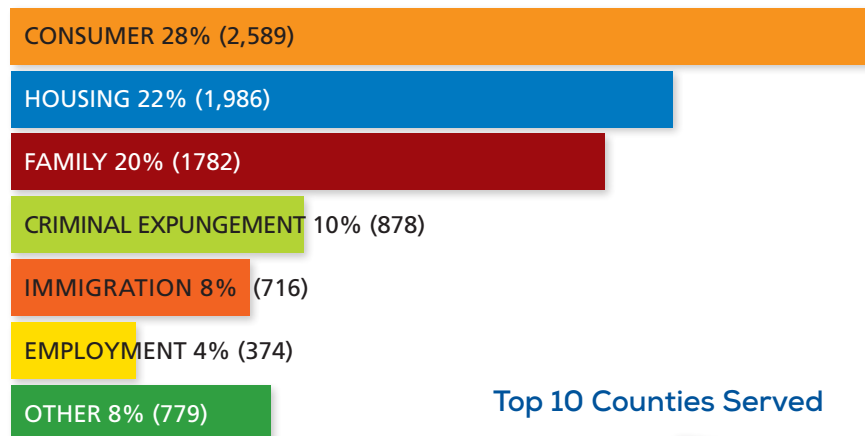
Mulegeta Woldemichael praised his volunteer attorney, John Hedback, for helping turn his family's circumstances around. After arriving in Minnesota from Ethiopia, he was lured by easy credit pitches to purchase a new car and run up numerous credit cards until his expenses were greater than his income. Those demands led him to skip rent payments, and ultimately resulted in "acute financial distress." Pro bono representation helped his family get back on its feet, with a bankruptcy discharge of debt.

Today, his family has a fresh start and is relieved that they can pay for their basic needs in their new homeland. Mulegeta shares this comment by Elizabeth Andrew: "Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

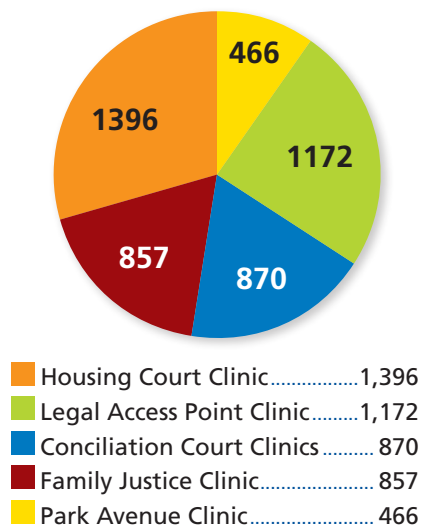
*Volunteers do not necessarily have the time;
they just have the heart.*

783 attorneys took a case during FY14-15: 9,104 services were provided, with 1,769 services received via telephone legal advice.

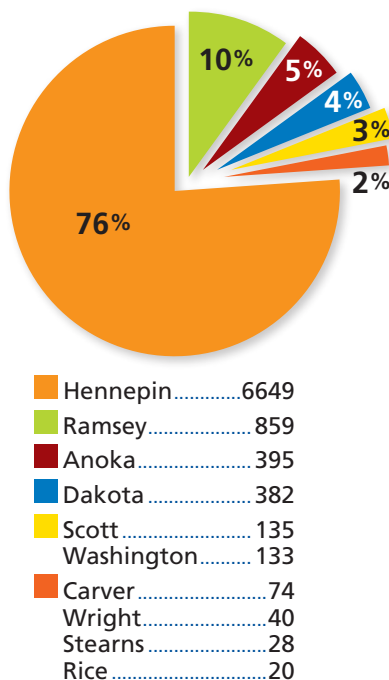
Categories of Law Provided



Number of Services Provided at Major Clinics



Top 10 Counties Served



Areas of Law Covered During Services

Private Landlord / Tenant	1,812	Name Change	13
Bankruptcy / Debtor Relief	949	Unfair Sales Practices	11
Criminal Expungement	878	Other Juvenile	11
Custody / Visitation	807	Other Housing	10
Collect / Repo / Def / Garnsh	733	State & Local Income Maintenance	9
Immigration / Naturalization	716	Neglected / Abused / Depend	9
Other Consumer / Finance	636	Mental Health	9
Divorce / Separation / Annulment	455	SSDI	8
Support	281	Advance Directive / Power of Attorney	7
Torts	172	SSI	7
Other Miscellaneous	146	Civil Rights	7
Collection Practices / Creditor Harassment	140	Loans / Installment Purch	6
Other Employment	129	Education Other	6
Employee Rights	126	Parental Rights Termination	5
Other Individual Rights	122	Employment Discrimination	5
Contracts / Warranties	111	Discipline (Exp & Susp)	4
Criminal Referrals	109	Indian / Tribal Law	4
Homeownership / Real Property	108	Adult Guardianship	3
Wage Claims & FLSA	91	Social Security (Not SSDI)	3
Other Family	82	Public Utilities	3
Domestic Abuse	60	Minor Guardianship Conservatorship	2
Public Housing	52	State & Local Health	2
Paternity	46	Housing Discrimination	2
Licenses	46	Municipal Legal Needs	2
Wills & Estates	33	Long-Term Care Health Facility	2
Adoption	30	Food Stamps / Commodities	2
Unemployment Compensation	28	Home & Community Based Care	1
Taxes not EITC	23	Other Health	1
Other Income Maintenance	14	Mobile Homes	1
Student Financial Aid	13	Federal Subsidized Housing	1
		TOTAL	9,104

Fresh Starts *and Second Chances*



Pedro & Jose

Many tech-savvy 14-year-olds love to compete to stay alive in video games like Call of Duty. But Pedro knew his 14-year-old nephew Jose was working to stay alive – literally. Jose was alone: no parents, no one to provide for him, surrounded by gang violence in the streets of Guatemala, and seeing people killed on a daily basis. Somehow, overcoming many obstacles, Jose made it to Minneapolis, where Pedro lived. But Pedro knew Jose would get sent straight back – unless they could get legal help.

And they found it – in the form of a collaboration that draws on the unique expertise of two legal service agencies: VLN and Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance (MMLA). While MMLA represented nephew Jose in immigration court, Mark Enslin of Lindquist & Vennum, a VLN volunteer, secured Pedro’s legal custody of Jose in family court.

VLN collaborates with dozens of legal and social service organizations, partnerships which leverage the contributions of each agency in securing a mutual client’s stability and well-being. Often, social services help individuals get ahead after trained VLN volunteer attorneys address legal barriers. With Pedro, it meant helping to secure a loved one’s immigration status. With others, it includes expunging criminal records to help people get jobs or securing the return of improperly withheld security deposits or garnished funds. Overall, the essential role VLN’s legal services play in these collaborations to secure stability and well-being is becoming clearer to the community at large.

And in this particular case, it helped a loving uncle save his nephew’s life.

You changed approx. 19,500 lives during FY14-15, including more than 7,600 children, through the delivery of pro bono legal services in Minnesota.



J.D. Hass



Fred Ojile

Hass, Ojile receive much-deserved recognition.

At VLN, so many of our volunteers go above and beyond; two that VLN recognized last year were J.D. Hass (Volunteer of the Year) and Fred Ojile (Distinguished Service).

Housing Court can be a challenge because trials have a short turn-around time. Last year, J.D. Haas routinely took those hard-to-place cases with as little as a day’s notice before trial. He provided full representation for 12 clients in the housing, civil, and administrative law programs and helped 15 clients in our Housing clinic. J.D. has earned praise and respect from community partners and members of the bench for his dedication and strong advocacy.

Fred took his first VLN case in 1985, more than 30 years ago, and has been a stalwart front line volunteer ever since. Family law cases can be a hard sell, but Fred has provided full representation to hundreds of clients in contested marital dissolution and custody cases as well as serving hundreds more through phone advice. Fred actually seeks out the difficult cases! And he serves all with a refreshing mix of compassion and common sense. For the past ten years, Fred has also served on VLN’s board.

Services Provided at Clinics & Events

Bankruptcy.....	156
Birth Certificate Project.....	113
Brian Coyle.....	75
CAPSH.....	278
Conciliation Court.....	698
Conciliation Court Appeal Clinic.....	56
Conciliation Court Consumer Debt Clinic.....	116
Criminal Expungement Clinics (3).....	183
Dignity Center.....	217
Family Justice Clinic.....	857
Housing Court.....	1,396
Jeremiah Clinics (2).....	10
Legal Access Point Clinic.....	1,172
MIWRC.....	99
Park Avenue Clinic.....	466
Project Opportunity Connect.....	68
Real Estate.....	34
StandDown.....	110
Youth Law Clinic.....	37
TOTAL.....	6,141

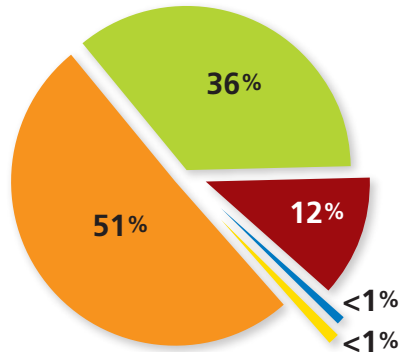
Top 10 Counties Served

Hennepin.....	6,649
Ramsey.....	859
Anoka.....	395
Dakota.....	382
Scott.....	135
Washington.....	133
Carver.....	74
Wright.....	40
Stearns.....	28
Rice.....	20

FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

Income

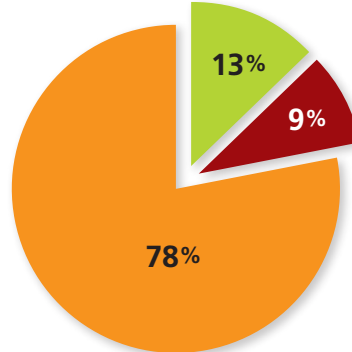


Contributions	574,663
Service Grants	409,968
Special Events	138,442
Workshops & Seminars	2,166
Interest	5,189
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,130,428

Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	551,654
Accounts Receivable	252,694
Prepaid Expenses	8,506
Other Assets	4,568
Net Property and Equipment	34,162
TOTAL ASSETS	\$851,584

Expenses



Program Services	881,647
Management & General	146,621
Fundraising	105,077
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,133,345

Liabilities and Net Assets

Payroll Liabilities	60,936
Accounts Payable	10,140
Deferred Revenue	6,500
Net Assets	774,008
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$851,584

Thank you!

Your donations to VLN, of your time and/or financial gifts, make pro bono happen! See our website for a complete list of VLN's generous supporters and a schedule of upcoming events. Please join us at an event, and tell others about VLN's mission.

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