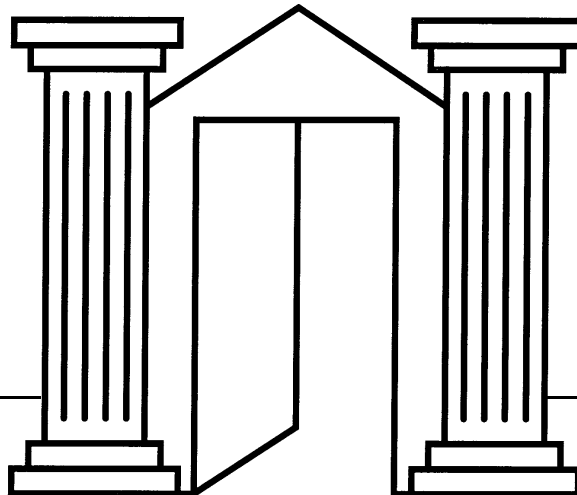

THE WOMEN'S LAW CENTER OF MARYLAND, INC.

Annual Summary

July 2000 - June 2001



New Initiatives

Property Distribution in Divorce

The Women's Law Center received a generous grant from the Lyn P. Meyerhoff Fund to support an advocacy and research project regarding financial distribution in divorce. Data from a systematic sampling of over 3,000 cases throughout the State will be reviewed to evaluate the factors that influence property distribution to determine whether distinctions exist based on gender. Policy recommendations will be developed based on this research. In addition, an educational and outreach effort will be undertaken to inform women about how to protect themselves financially during marriage and divorce.

Custody Study

Through grants from the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Morton K. and Jane Blaustein

Foundation, the Women's Law Center is studying the factors that influence custody decisions. In tandem with the research for the Property Distribution in Divorce project, data will be collected from custody cases throughout the State. The research analysis will show important information such as: who is getting custody; how often and why; what type of custody is being awarded; how custody affects the payment of child support and/or visitation; and, the impact of allegations of domestic violence and mediation.

Baltimore County POARP

The Protective Order Advocacy and Representation Project recently received additional funding for expansion to the Circuit Court of Baltimore County. This project, which is in partnership with the House of Ruth Maryland and the Administrative Office of

the Courts, will provide representation to victims of domestic violence seeking a Protective Order and is anticipated to begin in January. This expansion is made possible by a Violence Against Women Act grant from the Governor's Office on Crime Control and Prevention.

Help Establish Legal Protection Permanently (HELPP)

The Women's Law Center received a grant from the Office of Justice Programs to fund a full time lawyer to represent victims of domestic violence in their long-term divorce and custody proceedings. This project, which is a joint project with the House of Ruth, provides legal services to clients who have been represented by POARP attorneys in Montgomery County.

Board & Staff Updates

Staff

The Women's Law Center has experienced several staff changes during this year. New staff members include: L. Tracy Brown, Executive Director; Rebecca Bainum, Legal Projects Manager; Carmen White, Administrative Assistant; and Melissa Mineo, Baltimore City POARP attorney. In addition, Gwen Lubbert was promoted to Supervising Attorney for the Baltimore City POARP.

Board

The Women's Law Center is pleased that Venetia Bell, Claudia Diamond, Jodi Hammerman, Shirley Parry and Bobbie Steyer have joined the Board during the last year. The service of departing members Jennifer Burdick, Jennifer Beach and Beth Woodland-Hargrove is deeply appreciated.

On-Going Programs & Services

Family Law Hotline

In its 13th year, the Family Law Hotline continues to provide valuable information and advice regarding family law issues. The Hotline services have been expanded from two days a week to five days a week through a collaborative effort among the Women's Law Center, the Legal Aid Bureau and the Maryland Legal Assistance Network. The Women's Law Center continues to cover two days while the Legal Aid Bureau staffs the remaining three days. This expansion was made possible through a grant from the Maryland Legal Services Corporation. The Women's Law Center volunteer attorneys who answer the Hotline two days a week responded to the questions of over 2,600 callers during Fiscal Year 01. Over 100 experienced family law attorneys volunteer to serve at least one shift on the Hotline.

Legal Forms Helpline

Funded by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Legal Forms Helpline provides free information and instructions to individuals proceeding in family law matters without a lawyer. During Fiscal Year 01, the service provided guidance to 2,746 callers who needed help identifying and completing standard Domestic Relations Forms. The Helpline number is publicized on the AOC's flier announcing the on-line availability of the forms. Also, court clerks routinely refer pro se litigants to the Helpline for assistance.

Domestic Violence Projects

The Women's Law Center continues to operate the Protective Order and Representation Projects (POARP) in Baltimore City and the Domestic Violence Assistance Project (DVA) in Montgomery County. The Montgomery County initiative is in partnership with the House of Ruth. Both projects are in cooperation with the Administrative Office of the Courts. These projects provide free representation to victims of domestic violence at a critical stage, helping to insure that the victim's safety, custody issues and financial needs are addressed adequately by the Protective Order. In addition, POARP and DVA staff provide advocacy services, including safety planning, referrals and court accompaniment in criminal proceedings. During Fiscal Year 01, the Baltimore City POARP served 184 clients and the Montgomery County DVA office served 203 clients. The MEDOVI (Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence Project) continues to provide outreach and legal services to foreign-born victims of domestic violence through a renewed VOCA grant from the Department of Human Resources Office of Victim Services. A part-time Attorney Advocate has been hired to assist with cases. During Fiscal Year 01, MEDOVI staff provided services to 128 victims of domestic violence.

Litigation

The Court of Special Appeals issued a decision in *Peterson v.*

Peterson in favor of the petitioner represented by the Women's Law Center. The issue in this case involved the award of Emergency Family Maintenance (EFM) when a request for this relief was not checked off in the original petition and the respondent did not appear at the subsequent Protective Order hearing where EFM was awarded. The Court of Special Appeals found that the lack of notice to Respondent regarding EFM did not limit the relief that can be granted.

Publications & Public Information

Efforts to make reliable legal information easily accessible to the public continues to be a high priority for the Women's Law Center. The popular publications *Legal Rights of Marriage and Divorce* and *Sex Discrimination in Employment* were updated, rewritten and republished. In addition, *The Legal Rights of Unmarried Cohabitants* was updated and rewritten and publication is pending. The Women's Law Center has worked closely with the Maryland Legal Assistance Network to make this information available on the internet at the Peoples Law Library website. These publications are also available on the Women's Law Center's website and can be downloaded. In addition, VOCA funding from the Department of Human Resources supported the translation of the publication *Battered: What Can I Do?* into Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Russian.

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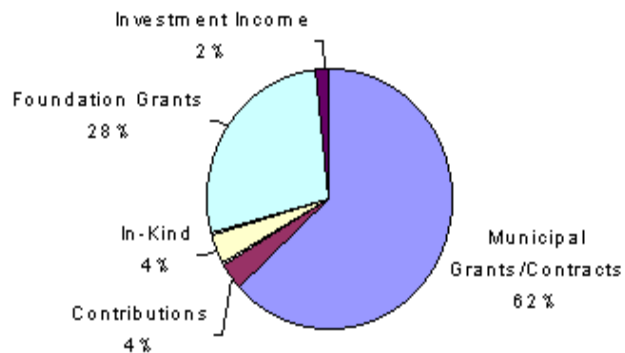
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Financials

Revenue

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Municipal Grants/Contracts | \$347,500 |
| Contributions | \$ 20,400 |
| In-Kind | \$ 21,500 |
| Foundation Grants | \$153,500 |
| Investment Income | \$ 9,200 |

TOTAL REVENUE \$552,100



Expenses

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Program Services | \$494,200 |
| Support Services | \$ 37,900 |

TOTAL EXPENSES \$532,100

