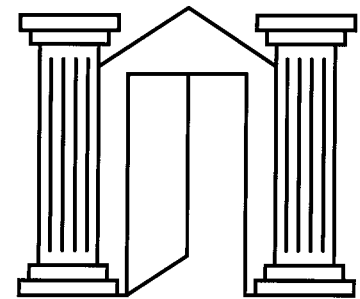


THE WOMEN'S LAW CENTER  
OF MARYLAND, INC

*Annual Report*  
*2004*



Dear Women's Law Center Supporter:

The Women's Law Center's mission is to achieve a legal system that insures justice and fairness for women. For over 30 years, Women's Law Center volunteers and staff have pursued this mission with passion and steadfast commitment. The focus of the organization's efforts has always been two-fold: to help individual women understand and protect their legal rights and to advocate for legal reforms that improve women's legal rights. During the past year, the work of our organization had an impact on both individuals and our community, reflecting our dual commitment to direct services and to advocacy.

The highlight of the year was the completion of the Custody and Financial Distribution research project that provides policy makers and practitioners with previously unavailable empirical information about family law decisions. This groundbreaking research was a collaboration among visionary funders, a dedicated staff and a voluntary advisory board.

Our ongoing domestic violence projects and hotline services continue to help thousands of individuals gain access to justice and protection from abuse.

We also worked hard to enhance our organization's ability to carry out its mission and to develop new leadership. We successfully completed the 30 for 30 Campaign, exceeding the fundraising goal. The generous support for this Campaign demonstrated that leaders in our community endorse the mission of the Women's Law Center. A group called Students Supporting the Women's Law Center formed at the University of Maryland School of Law. The students' vigor and interest in women's issues are inspirational.

As you read this report and consider the services provided by the Women's Law Center and the advocacy we undertake, we hope you will be proud to be a part of our 30 year legacy of promoting and protecting women's legal rights. We encourage your participation as we implement new projects and continue our advocacy on behalf of women.

Sincerely,  
**Francine Krumholz**  
Francine Krumholz  
President

**L. Tracy Brown**  
L. Tracy Brown  
Executive Director

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## Strategic Planning

The Women's Law Center Board and staff efforts continue to be guided by the strategic plan that was adopted in 2003. The plan includes a vision statement, mission statement and five key focus areas that are guiding the work of the organization for three to five years. Committees and staff develop annual work plans. The strategic plan and action plans are reviewed annually through a Board evaluation process. The direction and clarity that resulted from the rigorous strategic planning process helps the Women's Law Center more effectively direct its resources toward achieving the vision of a legal system that provides justice and fairness for women.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

- I. **LEADERSHIP:** The Women's Law Center is a leading voice and community resource to address issues affecting women by utilizing legal analysis and remedies.
- II. **MEMBERSHIP:** The Women's Law Center is a membership organization that offers opportunities for its members to support and participate in advocacy on behalf of women and families.
- III. **DIRECT SERVICES:** The Women's Law Center provides selected direct legal services that address unmet and critical legal needs for women with the goal of identifying and implementing systemic changes to improve the response of the legal system to women.
- IV. **RESEARCH AND POLICY:** The Women's Law Center conducts research and policy analysis and develops and implements policy recommendations on issues affecting women and families.
- V. **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** The Women's Law Center maintains and enhances the organization's infrastructure to adequately support the implementation of the mission of the organization.

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## Custody and Financial Distribution In Maryland Research Project

The Women's Law Center successfully completed a comprehensive state-wide research project which produced the first empirical data about custody and financial distribution decisions in Maryland. The initiative resulted in several key research findings and policy recommendations. The research methodology and results were documented in a final report titled *Custody and Financial Distribution*. This comprehensive research initiative was supported by the Lyn P. Meyerhoff Fund, the Morton K. and Jane Blaustein Foundation, the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Kaufman Center for Family Law.

The Custody and Financial Distribution in Divorce Research Project utilized a rigorous methodology and sophisticated analytical techniques to produce empirical data that are objective and sound. The study analyzed a randomly selected 10 percent sample of custody and divorce cases filed in Maryland in Fiscal Year 1999. Data were collected from cases filed in all 24 Maryland jurisdictions for a total of 1,867 cases in the sample. The research analyzed custody awards and the three types of financial distributions that may be awarded in a divorce case – alimony, monetary award and share of pension.

The research revealed several key findings:

- Women were plaintiffs in 61% of the cases analyzed.
- Very few requests for financial awards are actually made in divorce cases and few awards are made relative to the number of divorce cases. Only 8% of the divorce cases had alimony awards, 12% included monetary awards and 12% included awards of share of pension or retirement.
- Alimony was predictable only in marriages of 20 years or longer, with the highest income and where the income disparity between the parties approached 100%.
- For marriages of all duration, men earned almost double the women's income at the time of divorce.
- Women request and receive sole custody more often than men.
- Custody outcomes are more frequently resolved through agreements of the parties than through judicial intervention.
- Parents are sharing decision making through joint legal custody in almost half of the cases.

The key findings of the research project were summarized in the final report and in a PowerPoint presentation. The report was distributed to over 200 practitioners, judges, court administrators, advocacy groups and policy makers. The PowerPoint presentation was made at various conferences, meetings, and professional gatherings.

An active Advisory Committee analyzed the research data and findings. Based on these findings, the Women's Law Center proposed the following substantive policy recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Expand purpose of spousal support. Expand the purpose and implementation of spousal support/alimony awards to promote equitable allocation of financial resources and to compensate for losses so that the economic burden of divorce does not fall disproportionately on women and children.

Recommendation 2: Develop spousal support formulas. Increase the predictability and consistency of spousal support/alimony awards through the development and implementation of spousal support formulas.

Recommendation 3: Oppose joint custody presumption. Utilize empirical data to educate legislators, judges, masters and the public about the status and consequences of joint custody in Maryland and oppose legislation mandating a presumption of joint custody.

Recommendation 4: Increase alternative dispute resolution. Advocate for increased use and support of alternative dispute resolution methods in appropriate cases.

To promote the implementation of these recommendations, the Women's Law Center also proposed the formation of a broad based coalition of attorneys, judges, masters and academics to promote policy and practice changes that will improve custody and financial distribution outcomes for Maryland families.

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## Launched in 2004

### Students Supporting the Women's Law Center (SSWLC):

An enthusiastic group of students at the University of Maryland School of Law formed Students Supporting the Women's Law Center (SSWLC). The group quickly elected officers, became recognized as an official student organization and made plans to work with and support the Women's Law Center. The group hopes to influence the academic and professional lives of University of Maryland students who are interesting in learning about women's legal issues. SSWLC will create mentoring and pro bono work opportunities for its members. Plans include regular lunchtime roundtable discussions to provide a forum for students and experienced lawyers to discuss legal issues that affect women.

### Employment Committee:

As the Board and the Issues Committee examined the legal issues that most dramatically affect women, workplace issues emerged as the area most in need of attention. To focus on these issues, the Law Center's Employment Law Committee convened an Employment Law Advisory Group comprised of outstanding employment law practitioners. This Advisory Group developed an exhaustive list of the critical employment law issues affecting women, examined the available resources and services and discussed best practices in Maryland and elsewhere. As a result of its work, the Employment Law Advisory Group has recommended the establishment of an Employment Law Hotline modeled on the successful Family Law Hotline.



## 30 for 30 Campaign Completed

In honor of its 30 years of advocacy, the Women's Law Center initiated an ambitious fundraising campaign to raise 30 contributions of \$1,000. Contributors to the 30 for 30 Campaign each "purchased" a year that was significant to them. Many generous donors chose to honor the legacy and support the future of the organization by participating in the campaign. The Campaign goal was exceeded with 34 years purchased.

1971	Judge Kathleen O'Ferrall Friedman	1987	Susan Elgin
1972	Sally Gold	1988	Linda Barclay
1973	Sheila Sachs	1989	Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLC
1974	Judge Lynne Battaglia	1990	Kathleen Shemer
1975	Bonnie Messina	1991	Jana Singer
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1977	Judge Ellen Heller	1993	Lynne Durbin
1978	Deborah Bacharach Judge Ellen Hollander Michele McDonald Alexandra Strubing Sally Swann Judge Jamey Weitzman	1994	Peter Angelos
1979	L. Tracy Brown	1995	Sayra Wells Meyerhoff
1980	Dorothy Fait	1996	Cheryl Hystad Marla Hollandsworth Judge Brooke Murdock Christyne Neff
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1982	Judge Mary Ellen Rinehardt Judge Carol Smith	1998	Susan Elgin
1983	Judge Charlotte Cooksey	1999	Elisabeth Sachs
1984	Mimi Azrael	2000	Elizabeth Caplan
1985	Ann Sjoerdsma	2001	Venable Foundation
1986	Lisa Jose Fales Jeannette Karpay Dorothy Lennig Cheri Levin	2002	Gwen Tromley
		2003	Claudia Diamond Rhonda Combs Cheryl Jacobs Anonymous
		2004	Francine Krumholz

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## Publications and Education

The Women's Law Center recognizes that access to reliable information is a potent source of equality for women. With accurate information, women are able to make informed and competent choices based on facts and understanding. The Women's Law Center provides information and improves access to the legal system through hotlines and educational publications.

The Women's Law Center's newest publication, *Your Money Matters: A Guide to Financial Independence for Women* continues to be a popular source of information about the importance of achieving and maintaining financial independence at all stages of life. Its straightforward information, practical tips and tear-out planning worksheets offer excellent resources. The Women's Law Center distributed the publication to local high schools, colleges and counseling centers, and other interested groups.

The Women's Law Center's many other publications provide accurate information to women about their legal rights and continue to be popular. These publications include:

- *Legal Rights in Marriage and Divorce* (available in Spanish)
- *Legal Rights of Unmarried Cohabitants*
- *Sex Discrimination in Employment* (available in Spanish)
- *Battered – What Can I Do?*. Through the MEDOVI project, this publication is available in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean and Vietnamese.

Approximately 500 copies of the publications were distributed during the year.

# Hotlines

## Family Law Hotline

In its 16<sup>th</sup> year, the Family Law Hotline continues to provide valuable information and advice regarding family law issues. In FY04, the Women’s Law Center answered almost 2,500 calls to the Hotline. Seventy-three percent of the callers were women. Thirty-eight percent of the calls involved custody and another 38 percent involved divorce or separation. The attorneys also provided referrals to community-based legal and social services.

Two days a week, Women’s Law Center volunteer attorneys staff the Hotline. During FY04, 160 attorneys served on our panel and 56 worked one or more shifts. These attorneys provided 483 hours of pro bono services. The Family Law Hotline provides an excellent opportunity for Women’s Law Center members and supporters to contribute to the community and to fulfill their pro bono obligation. The Family Law Hotline is operated in partnership with the Legal Aid Bureau which handles the calls three days per week. The Hotline is funded by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC).

With the assistance of the Maryland Legal Assistance Network (MLAN), the Women’s Law Center expanded the web-based resources available to Hotline volunteers. A special Hotline Volunteer Resources link was added to the Women’s Law Center’s website. This link provides quick access to information about court procedures, substantive law and community based resources. Through MLAN, the Women’s Law Center is also participating in a new centralized intake system. New telephone technology provided the ability to play informational messages to callers while they are on hold and the ability to have calls roll over to other attorneys. During the upcoming year the centralized intake system will link several existing hotlines with the goal of decreasing duplication and increasing effective services for citizens.

## Legal Forms Helpline

The Legal Forms Helpline assists pro se litigants in completing the standard Domestic Relations Forms. In addition, callers are provided information about choosing which form to use, how to file forms and how to achieve service. Helpline attorneys also help callers to evaluate whether it is appropriate to proceed pro se and they make referrals to community-based social and legal services. The Legal Forms Helpline operates 20 hours per week. In FY04 the Helpline responded to over 2,200 calls. Almost half of these callers had an income of under \$30,000. The Legal Forms Helpline is funded by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

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## Services to Domestic Violence Victims

The Women's Law Center provides direct legal services to victims of domestic violence through Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Projects (POARP). POARP offices serve the Circuit Courts for Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Until January 2004, the Women's Law Center and the House of Ruth shared operational responsibility for POARP offices in Baltimore County and Montgomery County. All the POARP offices continue to be operated in partnership with the House of Ruth Maryland.

The POARP attorneys are located in the courthouses and all petitioners requesting protection from abuse are referred to the POARP office. Therefore, the services are extremely accessible to victims. All appropriate victims of intimate partner abuse are provided with representation at hearings. In addition to representation, other services include: initial consultation, explanation of the protective order statute, assistance completing the forms, answering divorce and custody questions, referrals, advocacy and safety planning.

In FY 2004, WLC attorneys in the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Assistance Program served 351 victims, Baltimore City POARP served 276 victims and Baltimore County POARP served 245 victims. The Administrative Office of the Courts funded the Baltimore City and Montgomery County POARP offices. The Baltimore County POARP office was funded jointly through a VAWA grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

The Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence (MEDOVI) Project provides outreach and direct legal services to foreign-born victims of domestic violence. The project sponsors a multi-lingual hotline and can provide interpreters when needed. Legal services include representation at Protective Order hearings and assistance with battered spouse waivers and self-petitions. The MEDOVI project maintains close ties within the immigrant community to insure that individuals and service providers are aware of the MEDOVI project. MEDOVI is funded by a Victims of Crime Assistance Project grant from the Department of Human Resources Office of Victim Services. Last year, MEDOVI served 103 clients.

## Legislative Efforts

Recognizing that legislative action can have a profound impact on the legal rights of women, the Women's Law Center is committed to legislative advocacy. During the 2004 General Assembly Session, the Law Center submitted written and/or oral testimony on 43 bills. The Law Center also issued action alerts to encourage members to take an active role in the process by contacting their legislators.

Several important bills were considered during the legislative session. The Women's Law Center supported a successful bill to increase the filing fees in civil cases and to allow the proceeds to be used to support legal services for the poor. The WLC also supported a bill to establish an Equal Pay Commission to study wage disparities. Although this bill passed, it was vetoed by Governor Ehrlich. Other priorities included support for a successful bill allowing a judge to transfer title to tangible family use personal property and successful opposition to bills that would have created a presumption of joint custody and criminal remedies to enforce visitation arrangements. The Women's Law Center also addressed bills relating to reproductive rights, domestic violence, hate crimes, parental leave, child custody, stalking/sexual assault and same sex marriage.

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## Judicial Selections

The Judicial Selections Committee is one of the most active of the Women's Law Center's committees. The Law Center is deeply committed to insuring a judiciary that reflects integrity and professionalism, because these qualities will help insure justice and fairness for women. The organization also seeks to increase the number of women seeking and obtaining judicial appointments. The Judicial Selections Committee offers an excellent opportunity for members to become involved in accomplishing these important goals.

The Judicial Selections Committee is comprised of attorneys who are Women's Law Center members and who have a wide range of legal experience. The Committee's process is deliberate and rigorous, utilizing specific selection criteria, including judicial demeanor, integrity, experience, and commitment to a judicial system free of gender bias. The Committee ranks each candidate and communicates its ranking and observations to the Judicial Nominating Commission and the Governor.

This year the Judicial Selections Committee reached out to judicial candidates by informing them that the Women's Law Center conducts judicial selections interviews. As a result, the Judicial Selections Committee has been exceptionally busy during 2004, interviewing 78 judicial candidates for vacancies in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Dorchester County and the Court of Special Appeals.

## Amicus Activity

The Women's Law Center recognizes that significant legal change often occurs through appellate and impact litigation. This year the Law Center joined several other amici in supporting the State in the case of *David Triggs, Jr. vs. State of Maryland* in the Court of Appeals. Mr. Triggs was convicted on eighteen counts of violation of a protective order based on a series of threatening calls to his wife. The issue on appeal was whether each individual call constituted a separate violation of the protective order. This case was particularly significant to the Women's Law Center because a POARP attorney handled the underlying protective order case and the pattern of abuse and harassment was exceptionally disturbing. The Court of Appeals unanimously found for the State and held that each phone call constituted a separate violation of the no contact order, regardless of the fact that some of the calls were within seconds of one another.

The Women's Law Center also supported amicus briefs in two cases in other jurisdictions. *Jackson vs. Birmingham Board of Education* was argued before the Supreme Court and addressed whether the private right of action created under Title IX encompasses retaliation for complaints for sex discrimination. The amicus brief was submitted by the National Partnership for Women and Families.

The Women's Law Center signed on to the brief submitted by Legal Momentum (formerly the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund) in the case of *Imes vs. City of Asheville*. This North Carolina case will determine whether domestic violence victims can sue an employer who fires them solely because of their status as a victim.

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## New Initiatives in 2005

### Research Replication:

The Women's Law Center received funding from the Administrative Office of the Courts to replicate the Custody and Financial Distribution Research Project. The research replication will collect data regarding custody and divorce cases filed in Fiscal Year 2003. Using the same methodology and research instrument that was employed in the original research project, field researchers will gather information from court files in each jurisdiction. The data analysis will include comparisons with the Fiscal Year 1999 data set, which will serve as a baseline. This comparison will reveal any changes or trends in custody and financial distribution decisions. It will also indicate changes in the usage of services provided through the family divisions that were newly funded in Fiscal Year 1999.

### Justice in Divorce Project:

The Women's Law Center plans to begin a Justice in Divorce Project during the upcoming year. The Justice in Divorce Project will implement the specific recommendations that resulted from the research project and will expand on the advocacy and legal reform suggested by the recommendations. The goal of the Justice in Divorce Project is to advocate for legal reforms that will improve the legal rights of women and promote positive outcomes for families. The Women's Law Center proposes to convene and staff a Justice in Divorce Coalition to provide an independent voice to promote policy and practice changes. Advocacy efforts will focus on the following key areas:

- *Alimony reform* – modify the approach to spousal support to focus on compensation for loss rather than relief of need so that the economic burden of divorce does not fall disproportionately on women and children.
- *Spousal Support/Alimony Formulas* – develop a formula for spousal support to be used voluntarily by Maryland judges.
- *Legislative Advocacy* – address bills that have an impact on custody and financial distribution decisions.
- *Appellate Research and Advocacy* – track appellate cases that have an impact on custody and financial distribution in divorce and consider appellate and amicus opportunities.



The Women's Law Center has received partial funding from the Lyn P. Meyerhoff Fund to support the Justice in Divorce Project. Additional funding is being sought from private and foundation sources.

**Spanish Legal Forms Helpline:**

In 2005, the Legal Forms Helpline services will expand to address the needs of Spanish speaking citizens. The Administrative Office of the Courts recently translated the Domestic Relations Forms and corresponding web pages into Spanish. As a complement to this new resource, pro se litigants who speak Spanish will be provided with the support services offered by the Legal Forms Helpline. Through additional funding from the Administrative Office of the Courts, a Monday morning shift will be added to the Legal Forms Helpline schedule and it will be staffed by a family law attorney who speaks Spanish.

**Employment Law Hotline:**

In 2005, the Law Center will move forward to implement the Employment Advisory Group's recommendation to establish an Employment Law Hotline. Our experience in successfully operating the Family Law Hotline will enable us to streamline the start-up of this exciting initiative. In the coming months, we will determine the full scope of services to be offered, draft proposals for funding, identify appropriate funding sources and recruit volunteer attorneys. Like its Family Law counterpart, the Employment Law Hotline will provide an excellent opportunity for Women's Law Center members and supporters to contribute to the community while fulfilling their *pro bono* obligation.

**Carroll County POARP:**

Beginning in October, the Women's Law Center's Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Project (POARP) will expand to the Carroll County Circuit and District Courts. It will be staffed by an attorney and a legal advocate. The Carroll County POARP is funded jointly through a VAWA grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

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Gwen B. Tromley  
Melanie A. Vaughn  
M. Kim Ward  
Hazel A. Warnick  
Bonnie L. Warnken  
Randy S. Wase  
Barbara Baer Waxman  
Bradford Webb  
Deborah Weimer  
Lynn F. Weinberg  
Susan Weingast  
Halee Weinstein  
Anne Weinstein  
Alyssa Weinstein  
Jamey H. Weitzman  
Jane Baker Wiley  
Caren L. Williams  
Stacey Winaker  
Rachel Wohl  
Margaret Zierdt

**Foundations & Funders**  
Administrative Office of  
the Courts  
Department of Human  
Resources  
Governors Office of Crime  
Control and  
Prevention  
Maryland Legal Services  
Corporation  
Lyn P. Meyerhoff Fund  
United Jewish Endowment  
Fund

**Businesses & Firms**  
Adelberg, Rudow, Dorf &  
Hendler, LLC  
Ballard, Spahr, Andrews &  
Ingersoll, LLC  
Beveridge & Diamond, PC  
Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP  
Ellin & Tucker, Chartered  
Gordon, Feinblatt, Rothman,  
Hoffberger & Hollander,  
LLC  
Hill & Barnes, LLC  
Kaufman, Ries & Elgin, PA  
Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.  
University of Baltimore School  
of Law  
Whiteford, Taylor & Preston,  
LLP

**In-Kind Contributions**  
Maryann Fiebach, BREC  
Consulting  
Jeanette Karpay  
Word-of-Mouse

**Volunteers**  
Meg Attanasio  
Shea Baggett  
Rubin Ballesteros  
Judith Brunton  
David Diggs  
Faith Dornbrand  
Catherine Drummond  
Keith Eckloff  
William Fanning  
Elizabeth Farquhar  
William Ferris  
Jo Benson Fogel  
Sally B. Gold  
Jennifer Goolie  
Barbara Gorinson  
Caroline Griffin  
Judith Hamilton

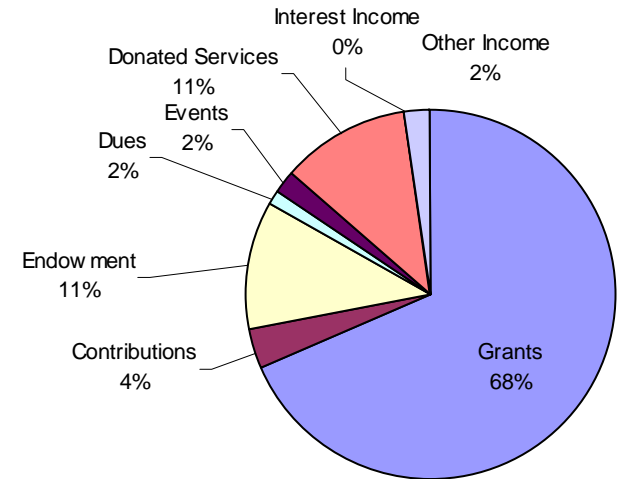
Roanne Handler  
Michele Ferris Hansen  
Dorothy Haynes  
Judith Helfman  
Kathi Hill  
Blaine Hoffman  
Suzanne Hood  
Kris Howanski  
Kathleen Huber-Scott  
Beverly Knox-Benn  
Fred Kobb  
Mary Kramer  
Albert Laisy  
Martin Lessans  
Leah Lewis  
Christine Malanga  
V. Peter Markuski  
Robbyn McIntosh  
Ann Miller  
Lauri Moylan  
Daniel Owel  
Joe Paradiso  
Bill Planta  
David Preller  
Fred Raab  
Charles Rand  
Ralph Rothwell  
Edythe Schneider  
Judith Shub-Condcliffe  
M.L. Smith  
Sheryl Snee  
Linda Spevack  
Bobbie Steyer  
Ferrier Stillman  
Rebecca Taylor  
Jennifer Terrasa  
Katherine Thompson  
Katie Thompson  
Randy Wase

*We regret any omissions or inaccuracies  
that may appear in the list above and  
welcome hearing from you regarding any  
corrections.*

## Financial Statement Fiscal Year 2004

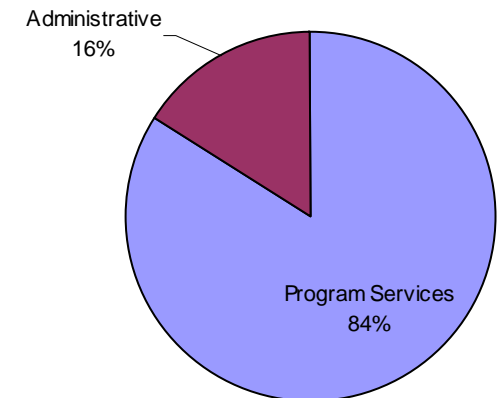
### Income

Grants	\$438,341
Contributions	\$24,210
Endowment	\$70,000
Dues	\$9,955
Events	\$12,310
Donated Services	\$72,450
Interest Income	\$1,086
Other Income	\$13,544
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$641,896</b>



### Expenses

Program Services	\$597,296
Administrative	\$114,419
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$711,715</b>



Change in Net Assets	(\$69,819)
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$301,834
Net Assets at End of Year	\$232,015

## Support the Women's Law Center

- Yes! I want to join the Women's Law Center — advocating for the legal rights of Maryland's women and children! Enclosed is \$50.
- I am already a member. I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of:
- \$100     \$75     \$50     \$35     \$Other\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Women's Law Center.  
Mail to: 305 W. Chesapeake Ave. #201, Towson, MD 21204  
For credit card payment, fax to: 410-321-0462

*A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting the Women's Law Center.  
Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State for the cost of copying and postage.*