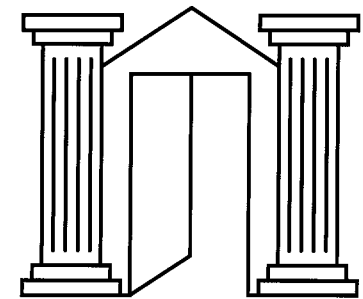


THE WOMEN'S LAW CENTER OF MARYLAND, INC

Annual Report 2006

*Men, their rights and nothing more;
women, their rights and nothing less.
~Susan B. Anthony*



Dear Women's Law Center Supporter:

The Women's Law Center envisions *a legal system that provides justice and fairness for women.*

Every action we take brings us one step closer to realizing this vision. And every year, as we look back on our accomplishments, we can see how far these steps have taken us, and how these efforts have made a real impact on the lives of women.

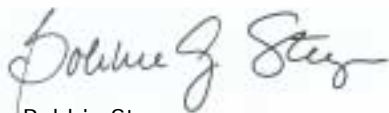
The Women's Law Center plans each program to have a two-tiered impact: ensuring that our legal service, education, research and advocacy efforts make the most difference **for individual women and for society as a whole.** Our work in domestic violence ensures safety for individual women – and ensures a safer society for all women. Our work in family law helps women navigate the civil legal system – and works to change the system to make it more equitable to women and families.

While our initiatives in these areas continued to grow and move forward this year, we also were able to broaden our focus to issues facing women in employment law. We found that a simple lack of information formed the most common barrier between women and their civil rights in employment.

We are now poised to launch a new educational program, the Employment Law Hotline. Designed using our successful two-tier impact model, the Hotline will address a critical gap in services to women and allow us to identify statistics and trends that will inform policy analysis and advocacy.

Staffed by employment law attorneys and modeled after our successful Family Law Hotline, the Employment Law Hotline will help callers educate themselves about their rights in the workplace. The Hotline is expected to address a range of employment issues, including inquiries about pregnancy discrimination, gender discrimination, pay equity, sexual harassment, family and medical leave issues, and issues related to immigrant and part-time workers.

As we move forward with our programs, we realize we do not work alone. You, our dedicated members, supporters and stakeholders, have made every step possible with your assistance. We are deeply grateful for your efforts, contributions and commitment to our cause, and we sincerely thank you.



Bobbie Steyer
President



L. Tracy Brown
Executive Director

Mission

To serve as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women by advocating for the rights of women through policy analysis, advocacy, litigation, education, research, judicial selection, legislative advocacy and direct services. 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.

Table of Contents

Direct Legal Services	1
Education	2
Employment Law Hotline	3
Research and Policy Analysis	4
Advocacy: Working for Broader Change	5
Students Supporting the Women's Law Center	6
Financial Statement	7
Justice Fund Donors	8
Women's Law Center Supporters	9
Board of Directors	12
Support the Justice Fund	13

*"Justice is not
something we
find, but
something we
create."*



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admin@wlcmd.org
www.wlcmd.org

Our POARP clients told us:

100% would use POARP legal services again

99% would go to court again if they experienced domestic violence

96% felt safer after using POARP services

84% could not have afforded an attorney without POARP

86% said it was easier to use the services because they were located in the courthouse

Direct Legal Services

The Women's Law Center's family law projects address problems on a deeply personal level, helping individual women in areas where the Women's Law Center can make a direct impact. Our legal services programs help domestic violence victims use the legal system to gain safety for themselves and their children and place contested custody cases with private attorneys. All of the projects are administered through the Women's Law Center's Bruce A. Kaufman Center for Family Law.

Our accomplishments in 2006 include:

- Through its Protective Order and Representation Projects (POARP), **the Women's Law Center provided free, courthouse-based attorneys to victims of domestic violence seeking protective orders through the civil circuit courts in Baltimore City and Baltimore County and the Circuit Court and District Court in Carroll County.** The POARP attorneys and advocates helped 412 victims of intimate partner abuse. This project, which is funded through the Administrative Office of the Courts, is conducted in partnership with the House of Ruth.
- **Increased funding of the Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence (MEDOVI) Project, which serves foreign-born domestic violence victims, allowed the Women's Law Center to expand staffing by increasing the hours worked by the Project Director.** The project provides information, referrals and legal representation in immigration hearings. A multi-lingual hotline and funding for interpreters allow non-English speakers to access services. MEDOVI is funded by a Victims of Crime Assistance Project grant from the Department of Human Resources Office of Victim Services and a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- **The Reduced Fee Child Custody Project completed its first full year, with 34 attorneys handling 40 contested child custody cases in Baltimore County.** Funded by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, this project provides low-income citizens with access to an attorney. The Women's Law Center screens cases and places them with experienced attorneys, who agree to represent the client at a significantly reduced fee and to continue the representation even after they exceed the payment cap. The services are free to the clients.

Education

Access to reliable information is a powerful source of equality for women. The Women's Law Center educates women through its publications and by providing one-on-one attorney consultations to callers of its two hotlines: the Family Law Hotline and the Legal Forms Helpline.

Our accomplishments in 2006:

Hotlines

- New technology and expanded funding allowed the ***Family Law Hotline*** – now in its 16th year of operation – to double the number of callers it helped with family law problems and expand the available volunteer shifts from four to ten shifts per week. The Hotline provided valuable information and advice to 4,398 callers, many of whom had no other access to an attorney. Volunteer attorneys provided over 275 hours of meaningful and convenient pro bono service through the Hotline. Funded by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, the Hotline is operated in partnership with the Legal Aid Bureau.
- The ***Legal Forms Helpline*** assisted 2,240 Marylanders complete Domestic Relations forms, choose which forms to use and effectively achieve their family law goals. One shift is staffed by a bi-lingual attorney in order to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking citizens. This project is funded through the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Publications

- The Women's Law Center revised its publication *Battered: What Can I Do?* to include significant updates in the law and current resources for domestic violence victims. The new version will be translated into Spanish, Russian, Korean and Arabic.
- The Women's Law Center distributed over 500 copies of our publications, which include: *Your Money Matters: A Guide to Financial Independence for Women*; *Legal Rights in Marriage and Divorce* (available in Spanish and English); *Legal Rights of Unmarried Cohabitants*; *Sex Discrimination in Employment* (available in Spanish and English); and *Battered – What Can I Do?* (available in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean and Vietnamese).

Our Spanish-speaking attorney on the Legal Forms Helpline spoke with a woman who needed to change her child's name on the birth certificate and social security card. The attorney identified the necessary forms, explained confusing terms and translated as they completed the forms together. Without the assistance of a bi-lingual attorney, this process would have been extremely challenging.

Research conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research for the Maryland Equal Pay Commission revealed that women make 76% as much as men. Comparing men and women who are full-time and full year workers, women make 82% as much as men. More than one-fifth of the difference in women's and men's earnings cannot be explained by differences in their education, potential work experience, job characteristics, or other measurable factors.

3

Employment Law Hotline

The Women's Law Center recognizes that working women today face complex challenges.

Is my company required to offer paid family leave, unpaid family leave, or no family leave? Can I be fired because I am pregnant? Is what he said sexual harassment? What can I do to stop it? I'm a woman doing the same job as my male co-worker but I get paid less. Is that legal? What about sick leave, health benefits, overtime, living wages, pay equity....?

Through the Employment Law Hotline, which will launch in December 2006, the Women's Law Center will offer answers to these questions and more.

We identified a critical need among working women for basic information, education, advice and referrals. We will meet this need by offering a unique and accessible resource to educate Maryland workers about their labor and employment rights. The Hotline will provide callers with free information and appropriate referrals to address their concerns, questions and problems in the workplace.

This one-on-one legal-education tool will empower callers to correctly identify an illegal action, prevent future violations, and respond to their situation. Callers will also get information on state and/or federal agencies and other employment-related organizations that can help.

At the same time, the Women's Law Center will compile statistics about labor and employment law issues and identify trends. Data from the Hotline will bring to light areas in which working women struggle, giving us an opportunity to impact and inform policy in employment law. Thus, while we work to help one woman, we help policymakers learn how we can attain **justice and fairness for all women**.

This year, we made great strides toward implementing the new Employment Law Hotline. We obtained seed funding from the Open Society Institute and the Marjorie Cook Foundation. This support allowed us to hire a part-time Project Director. We also recruited volunteer attorneys, worked toward producing a manual for the attorneys, began outreach efforts and developed policies and procedures for operation of the Hotline.

Research and Policy Analysis

The Women's Law Center takes a leading role in identifying and addressing inequities that impact women, continuing to focus our efforts this year on the effects of divorce on Maryland's women and families. Our efforts in the area of family law are made possible through the Women's Law Center's Bruce A. Kaufman Center for Family Law.

- The Women's Law Center completed the data collection and initial analysis of its research on decisions, outcomes and utilization of court services in family law cases that were filed in 2003. This research replicates the prior analysis of 1999 case filings. Because the research findings from the 1999 database were so useful in providing the first-ever empirical data about family law cases, the Administrative Office of the Courts provided funding to replicate the research utilizing 2003 filings in order to identify trends and to provide additional information about utilization of court services.
- The Justice in Divorce Project, launched last year to address the issues raised in our first family law study, advocated for legislative changes that support an equitable distribution of financial resources at divorce. **During the 2006 General Assembly session, we successfully pushed for legislation that would allow a judge to transfer title to real property from one spouse to the other.** This major change in family law is important to women because it allows the judge to equalize the financial impact of divorce. The Justice in Divorce Project also completed an analysis of appellate cases that involved financial distributions and began developing the components of voluntary alimony guidelines. The Justice in Divorce Project is funded through a generous challenge grant from the Lyn P. Meyerhoff Foundation, contributions to the Women's Law Center's Justice Fund and from individual contributions directed toward this project.

During Fiscal Year 2006, 30,119 custody and divorce cases were filed in Maryland. Women's Law Center researchers traveled to every jurisdiction in Maryland and reviewed 3,366 cases - a randomly selected 10% sample - to collect detailed information about custody and financial distribution decisions.

Of the 153 judges serving on the circuit courts in Maryland, 42 (27.4%) are women. Of the 112 judges on the District Court, 37 (33%) are women.

There are no female District Court judges sitting in the nine counties that comprise the Eastern Shore.

Of the 207 people who serve on the Trial Court Judicial Nominating Commissions, 62 (29.9%) are women.

5

Advocacy: Working for Broader Change

Legislative Advocacy

The Women's Law Center actively participates in the legislative process by monitoring and taking positions on bills that address domestic violence, sexual assault, family law, reproductive rights, equal pay and other issues that impact women.

Last year the Women's Law Center:

- Monitored over 60 bills and submitted written and oral testimony on 22 key bills.
- Involved members in the legislative process by sending legislative alerts to galvanize grassroots action.
- Provided administrative staff support to the newly-formed Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). MLAW provides an independent voice for Maryland's women in the legislative process. Without the Women's Law Center's support, MLAW would not have been able to communicate as effectively with its members and other women's advocates to develop, disseminate and support a legislative agenda for women.

Amicus Activity

The Women's Law Center signed on to appellate briefs in two important cases that have an impact on the legal rights of women. *Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co. v. Sheila White*, was argued before the Supreme Court and examines the question of what constitutes actionable employer retaliation under Title VII for an employee's complaint about discrimination. The Women's Law Center of Maryland also signed on to an amicus brief in the case of *State v. Cruz*, where the appellant was prosecuted in Talbot County for the crime of reckless endangerment as the result of cocaine use during pregnancy. The brief argued that the prosecution of Ms. Cruz was based on discriminatory and stereotypical views of pregnancy and women and violated the Equal Rights Amendment and due process protections. Both cases were decided in favor of the side argued in the amicus briefs.

Judicial Selections

The Women's Law Center is deeply committed to insuring a judiciary that reflects integrity and professionalism, as these qualities will help insure justice and fairness for women. The Judicial Selections Committee, comprised of attorneys who are members and who have a wide range of legal experience, is one of the most active of the Women's Law Center's committees. The committee process is member-inclusive, objective and confidential. The Judicial Selections Committee conducts rigorous interviews and ranks each candidate using specific selection criteria including judicial demeanor, integrity, experience, and commitment to a judicial system free of gender bias. The Committee communicates its ranking and observations to the Judicial Nominating Commission and the governor. In the past year, the Women's Law Center interviewed 37 judicial candidates for vacancies in 7 jurisdictions.

Students Supporting the Women's Law Center

In 2005, the Women's Law Center formed a partnership with students at the University of Baltimore and University of Maryland law schools, who established Students Supporting the Women's Law Center (SSWLC). The work of the Women's Law Center has been enriched by the presence of these student leaders, through their analysis of issues, their dedication and their fundraising support.

This year, the Women's Law Center initiated a pilot mentoring project, designed to foster dialogue and networking between more experienced attorneys and current law students who are members of SSWLC. By providing guidance to students early in their careers, WLC mentors can help law students reach their personal and professional goals and enhance their influence on campus and beyond. With this project, we anticipate that mentors and students will meet several times per semester—formally and informally— and may discuss such issues as course selections, summer job prospects and judicial clerkships after graduation.

The relationships formed through this project will give these motivated students the opportunity to interact with experienced attorneys who are committed to protecting women's legal rights. The project also will allow the Women's Law Center to incorporate the viewpoints, energy and creativity of these students in advancing women's rights.

The student groups held events and symposia throughout the year, such as a symposium on the pro-choice movement, a panel on the Supreme Court justice nomination and a panel on the link between animal cruelty and domestic violence. In addition, the groups organized a lobby day and letter-writing campaign for human trafficking legislation, and joined the Maryland Coalition for Emergency Contraception for a news conference and letter-writing campaign.

"The Students Supporting the Women's Law Center has provided me with the opportunity to be a part of a great network of successful and powerful women. Members appreciate having a forum where we can discuss and address issues that impact women."

- Ranju Shrestha
University of
Baltimore SSWLC
President

Statement of Financial Position

Income Statement

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2006

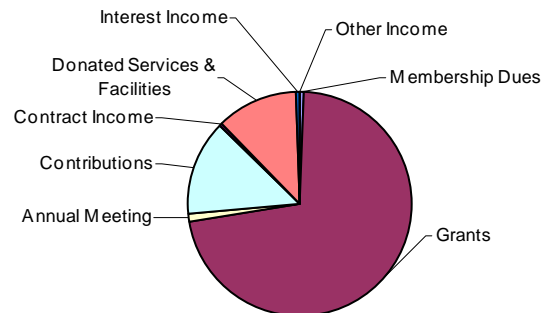
Income	
Grants	\$976,707
Contributions	\$184,343
Annual Meeting	\$15,045
Contract Income	\$6,000
Donated Services & Facilities	\$158,565
Membership Dues	\$8,128
Interest Income	\$7,694
Loss on disposal of property	\$0
Other Income	\$673
TOTAL	\$1,357,155
Expenses	
Program Services	\$859,127
Management & General	\$107,383
Fundraising	\$19,100
TOTAL	\$985,610
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$371,545
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$330,627
Net Assets at End of Year	\$702,172

Balance Sheet

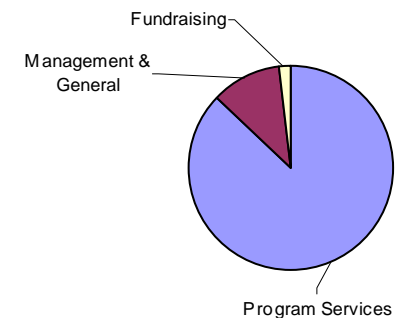
For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2006

Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$525,434
Grants Receivable, current portion	\$120,898
Other Receivables	\$2,481
Prepaid Expense	\$8,749
Equipment	\$18,633
Grants Receivable, net of current portion	\$80,952
Security Deposit	\$1,157
TOTAL ASSETS	\$758,304
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$16,518
Accrued Payroll Expense	\$14,547
Refundable Advance	\$25,067
Total Current Liabilities	\$56,132
Net Assets	
Unrestricted: Undesignated	\$350,183
Unrestricted: Board Designated	\$171,455
Temporarily Restricted	\$180,534
Total Net Assets	\$702,172
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$758,304

Income



Expense



Justice Fund Donors

The Justice Fund supports the Women's Law Center's efforts in research, education, direct services and advocacy. Justice Fund contributors support our efforts to build a just and equitable society for women. Thank you for sharing our vision and supporting our cause!

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We recognize and thank the following donors who supported the Women's Law Center through general contributions, dues, workplace giving, grants, event sponsorships and volunteer efforts.

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corrections.*

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WLC Executive Director Tracy Brown was selected as one of *The Daily's Record's* Top 100 Women. She also was appointed by Governor Ehrlich to Maryland's Equal Pay Commission.

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Erica Rimlinger, Development Director
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Deepa Bijpuria, Project Director

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Rebecca Saybolt Bainum, Project Director

EMPLOYMENT LAW HOTLINE

Jill Wrigley, Project Director

Contribute to the Justice Fund

The **Justice Fund** provides us with critical funds needed to invest in the future of the organization. Gifts to the **Justice Fund** will help the Women's Law Center provide critical services to women and stand at the forefront of legal and public policy initiatives in the state. Your investment in the **Justice Fund** will help build and sustain an equitable society for the next generation of women and their families. To contribute, fill out the form below and mail it to: The Women's Law Center, 305 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 201, Towson, MD 21204. For more information about the Women's Law Center, visit our website at www.wlcmd.org.

YES! I want to help create justice for women in Maryland!

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equity Club \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Liberty Club \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy Circle \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor Circle \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visionary Society \$2,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Legacy Circle \$5,000 |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

- I would like to receive emailed Action Alerts on women's issues and newsletter items (*Your email will not be shared .*)
 My employer will match this gift.

- Check made payable to *The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.* is enclosed.
 Please charge my VISA MasterCard

Card Number _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name on Card _____ Signature: _____

- I would like to spread my gift throughout the year (Benefactor Circle members and higher):

Total amount \$ _____ Bill me monthly: \$ _____ Bill me quarterly: \$ _____

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.