

Annual Report **2019**

**THE  
LEGAL AID  
SOCIETY**

# Justice in Every Borough



**Leading through partnership,  
expertise where it matters**

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# Delivering Justice in Every Borough

The Legal Aid Society is built on one simple but powerful belief: that no New Yorker should be denied the right to equal justice. We seek to be a beacon of hope for New Yorkers who feel neglected—regardless of who they are, where they come from, or how they identify. From our start over 140 years ago, our growth has mirrored that of the city we serve. Today, we are proud to be the largest, most influential social justice law firm in NYC.

Our staff and attorneys deliver justice in every borough, working tirelessly to defend our clients and dismantle the hidden, systemic barriers that can prevent them from thriving. As passionate advocates for individuals and families, The Legal Aid Society is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of NYC.



## Leading Through Partnership

The partnerships we've forged with communities across the city are the driving force behind our transformative litigation and advocacy work.



## Expertise Where it Matters

The expertise and dedication of our staff empower us to deliver justice in every borough. When life and liberty hang in the balance, expertise makes a crucial difference in the lives of our clients.

## Report of the Attorney-in-Chief

In January 2019, I was privileged to return to The Legal Aid Society where I grew up professionally. I started my career here as a trial attorney in Housing Court, working on health and disability law reform issues, running a neighborhood office and the Immigration Law Unit, and finally serving as General Counsel and Chief Administrative Officer. Coming back after eight years on the Executive Team at the NYS Attorney General's office, I discovered many familiar faces coupled with a new dynamism and energy, and a vigorous commitment to our communities and partners. The Legal Aid Society I returned to is larger and more diverse. It is more creative and more determined. It is a leader in criminal justice, civil legal services, and juvenile rights. And it is recognized nationally for the talent and dedicated work of our staff. It was with great pride and humility that I came home to The Legal Aid Society, inspired to lead the organization in NYC most capable of rising to the extraordinary challenges faced by our city and country.

It has been a year of significant achievement.

Our staff and attorneys secured victories in and out of the courtroom with implications across NYS—and in some cases, across the nation. They worked in collaboration with community partners and affected individuals to build strong and lasting coalitions that are, without a doubt, a key to their success.

Among the groundbreaking achievements this year were victories in criminal justice and tenant protection. The commitment to our mission and the enduring respect for the protection of basic human rights led us, working in coalitions with community advocates, to challenge the federal government and take a stand for immigrants across the country in a series of groundbreaking court cases.

No one has a deeper understanding or greater empathy for our client communities than the individuals who make up The Legal Aid Society. We are over two thousand attorneys, paralegals, investigators, social workers, support and administrative staff united by the simple but powerful belief that no person should be denied the right to equal justice. Together, our tireless efforts have resulted in lasting change for the people and communities we serve.

As we continue our work in the year ahead, we remain vigilant in our commitment to justice.



**Janet Sabel**  
ATTORNEY-IN-CHIEF AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## Report of the President & Chair of the Board

This year, we are happy to report that the advocacy efforts of our staff resulted in improved lives for our clients through crucial reforms in the criminal defense, civil legal services, and juvenile rights justice systems. The Legal Aid Society continues to play an important role in challenging government violations of our clients' rights, and in making NYC a better place to live.

As announced in these pages last year, Janet Sabel joined us as Attorney-in-Chief and Chief Executive Officer in January. Janet's 25 years of experience at The Legal Aid Society, coupled with eight years at the NYS Attorney General's Office where she served as Chief Deputy Attorney General, made her the ideal person for the role. So far, she's done an incredible job of bringing people together, improving workplace culture, and instituting innovative programs and policies.

Another exciting moment this year was the launch of our redesigned website, which provides clients and supporters with the information they need to know about their rights, get legal help, and find answers to pressing questions. The new website also provides a place to learn about the outstanding accomplishments of our staff.

With great sadness, we must also report the passing of our beloved President, Blaine V. "Fin" Fogg. On July 14, Fin lost his courageous 18-month battle with brain cancer. Fin was a fierce advocate for the rights of our clients and for our staff—he constantly talked about his admiration for our staff who, as he would say, looked at what they were doing as a calling and not just a job. As President he contributed his time, his wisdom, his humor, and his unbelievable energy to make The Legal Aid Society a better place. We will sorely miss him.

We were fortunate that John K. Carroll, a Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, and a retired partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, assisted with Fin's responsibilities during his illness. John has now been elected President of The Legal Aid Society.

As ever, we're grateful for the support of the Sustaining Law Firms without which our work would not be possible. Special thanks to the Chairs of our various committees including Charles Weinstein (Audit); Brian H. Polovoy (Development); Tracy Richelle High (Diversity and Inclusion); Douglas Curtis (Finance and Investment); Thomas M. Cerabino (Nominating and Governance); Aaron R. Marcu (Practice Support); Bradley I. Ruskin (Real Estate); Mark P. Goodman (Retirement & Benefits); and Randy Mastro (Strategic Planning and External Relations).

Of course our greatest asset at The Legal Aid Society is our staff; we thank them for their dedication to our clients and organization. Their names appear on the inside covers of this annual report.

We look forward to another year of providing the highest quality representation for our clients in partnership with our law firm supporters and the many organizations working in the communities we serve.



**John K. Carroll**  
PRESIDENT

**Richard J. Davis**  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS

## Board of Directors

Comprised of some of the brightest minds from law firms, law schools, corporations, and communities, our board members provide crucial guidance that strengthens our work.

### OFFICERS

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PRESIDENT

**Douglas F. Curtis**  
TREASURER

**Janet Sabel**  
ATTORNEY-IN-CHIEF AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Scott Rosenberg**  
SECRETARY AND GENERAL COUNSEL

**Archana Jayaram**  
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Charles Weinstein

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Jamie L. Wine

## Leadership

Leaders of The Legal Aid Society are some of the most respected in their fields, offering decades of experience and perspective gained from dedicating their careers to ensuring equal justice.

### Janet Sabel

ATTORNEY-IN-CHIEF AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

### Adriene Holder

ATTORNEY-IN-CHARGE,  
CIVIL PRACTICE

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ATTORNEY-IN-CHARGE,  
CRIMINAL DEFENSE PRACTICE

### Dawne Mitchell

ATTORNEY-IN-CHARGE,  
JUVENILE RIGHTS PRACTICE

### Scott Rosenberg

SECRETARY AND GENERAL COUNSEL

### Archana Jayaram

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

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### Ezra Miller

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### Edward Braunstein

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

### Louis Sartori

DIRECTOR OF THE PRO BONO PRACTICE

### Patricia Bath

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

### Sharon Kleinhandler

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

### Bharati Narumanchi

DIRECTOR OF RECRUITMENT

### Andrew Kudysch

FACILITIES MANAGER



## In Memory of Blaine V. "Fin" Fogg

Blaine V. "Fin" Fogg—a great leader, mentor, and friend, who devoted 10 years of service as the President of The Legal Aid Society—passed away on July 14. The entire family at The Legal Aid Society suffered a tragic loss at the death of this great man who had given so much of himself to the cause of equal justice for all.

Fin's steadfast support, wise counsel, and his oft-stated belief that the availability of justice must not depend on a person's ability to pay sustained the Board of Directors, managers, and staff. His legacy continues to live on through them. Fin was a fierce advocate for the rights of our clients and for our staff. He made a real difference by increasing support for The Legal Aid Society's mission through his persistence and enthusiasm. We will miss our beloved friend.

The Legal Aid Society celebrates its good fortune in having been the beneficiary of the excellent judgment, generous spirit, and wonderful sense of humor of Fin Fogg, the very best of lawyers and finest of people. We extend our deepest condolences to his wonderful family.



## Sustaining Law Firms

The Legal Aid Society is proud to acknowledge the outstanding support of the Sustaining Law Firms, whose dedication helps ensure that all New Yorkers have access to justice. These firms uphold the work of The Legal Aid Society by contributing at a leadership level of \$600 per attorney in their New York offices.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Arnold & Porter LLP

Baker & Hostetler LLP

Boies Schiller Flexner LLP

Buckley LLP

Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP

Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

Cooley LLP

Covington & Burling LLP

Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP

Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

Dechert LLP

DLA Piper LLP (US)

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer US LLP

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP

Friedman Kaplan Seiler & Adelman LLP

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Goodwin Procter LLP

Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP

Jones Day

Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP

Lankler Siffert & Wohl LLP

Latham & Watkins LLP

Mayer Brown LLP

Milbank LLP

Morvillo Abramowitz Grand Iason & Anello PC

O'Melveny & Myers LLP

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

Proskauer Rose LLP

Reed Smith LLP

Ropes & Gray LLP

Rower LLC

Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP

Shearman & Sterling LLP

Sidley Austin LLP

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz

Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

White & Case LLP

Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

Winston & Strawn LLP

Wollmuth Maher & Deutsch LLP



# Where We Work

With offices in every borough, The Legal Aid Society's clients don't have to look far for the expertise they need. Here's a snapshot of our staff's accomplishments in each borough this year:

## MANHATTAN

In Manhattan, teams employed diverse expertise on issues ranging from homelessness and education to mental health. Of note this year was our partnership with the government and faith-based groups to host warrant-clearing workshops for people in the shelter system; our collaboration with adolescent mental health providers to help nearly 500 children and families access the educational support services needed to succeed at school; and the launch of our Juvenile Youth Leadership Board to empower and engage youth beyond the courthouse.

## STATEN ISLAND

Our Staten Island staff this year advocated to ensure opioid addiction is treated as a public health crisis; partnered with the NYC Elder Abuse Center's Multidisciplinary Team to provide legal counsel on elder abuse cases in the borough; and tirelessly worked to ensure that young people do not face unlawful discrimination by employers, schools, and police due to a juvenile delinquency arrest or family court disposition.

## BRONX

Our staff in the Bronx are incredibly dedicated—often spending their days in court fighting for clients, their evenings providing Know Your Rights trainings at local schools and churches, and their weekends running in 5K races to support grass-roots organizations. Notable recent victories include securing 45 affordable housing units, and ensuring the future of the oldest African American Baptist church in the borough following its foreclosure.

## QUEENS

In Queens this year, we worked to secure judgments to turn previously unregulated housing units in 15 buildings into rent-stabilized units, safeguarding affordable housing and strengthening local communities for years to come; and we provided thousands of people incarcerated on Rikers Island with vital telephone access to contact attorneys, service providers, and bail funds.

## BROOKLYN

This year in Brooklyn, staff's urgent response to the presence of ICE agents targeting immigrant clients around Brooklyn Criminal Court initiated our campaign to raise public awareness and press the government to end this unjust practice. We also launched a pilot program to provide guaranteed counsel to public housing tenants facing eviction for the first time, and trained 400 Department of Education psychologists on the experience and needs of children in foster care.



# Our Year in Review

This year, The Legal Aid Society staff urgently responded to continued attacks on the rights of marginalized communities and on our institutions. We worked to develop new coalitions and programs that helped ensure New York is a safe and supportive place for all people.



## What We Did in 2019

America's ideal of equal justice under the law is only as meaningful as the experiences and outcomes our justice system creates. In 2019, staff across The Legal Aid Society's practice areas worked to reinforce this ideal and ensure that NYC places social, racial, and economic equity at its heart.

This year, our Civil Practice delivered its expertise to clients and marginalized communities across NYC—whether by fighting housing and lending practices that discriminate against domestic violence survivors or older adults, securing settlements for individuals who were unfairly sanctioned or denied benefits, or expanding access to vital health care services.

Utilizing the experience of our staff and the power of partnership, the Criminal Defense Practice helped bring historic reform to the criminal legal system in NYS. Our efforts this year will result in the abolition of antiquated and unfair discovery, bail, and speedy trial laws in 2020.

In the Juvenile Rights Practice, staff worked zealously to safeguard the rights and needs of our clients in every facet of their lives from courts and schools to protective agencies. This year, we launched two new client-centered initiatives—the Juvenile Rights Youth Leadership Board and Set the Record Straight—which fight to decriminalize foster youth, and challenge lawless revocations of youth on aftercare.





“  
By working within  
communities  
we can meet the  
clients where  
they are.”

**KHADINE DE PAIVA**  
**STAFF ATTORNEY**  
**FORECLOSURE**  
**PREVENTION PROJECT**

## Leading Through Partnership

**This year, partnerships with community organizations, government agencies, pro bono partners, and other advocates led us to achieve sweeping reforms and case victories on behalf of all New Yorkers.**

Our close collaboration with clients, government officials, and agencies helped us bring increased fairness to our criminal legal system this year. Staff from our Criminal Defense Practice joined with community advocates, many of them personally impacted by the justice system, to mount an action plan and campaign to reform key criminal justice laws, educate the public, and advocate for legislation to force needed changes to the state’s bail, discovery, and speedy trial laws. This powerful partnership was successful. As we move towards the January 1, 2020 effective date of new criminal justice laws in NYS, we remain unified with our partners, working together to ensure that these important protections are implemented correctly and not rolled back.

The Legal Aid Society’s housing practitioners made history this year by coordinating the largest state-wide coalition of tenant and affordable housing advocates in recent history and securing the most significant changes to the rent regulation system in a generation. The new law expanded regulation statewide for the first time and eliminated high-rent vacancy decontrol and preferential rents. These changes will have an enormous impact on the lives of the 2.5 million people occupying rent-regulated apartments in NYC. Our Civil Practice also formed the Coalition of Labor and Disability Advocates to ensure low-wage workers’ rights are upheld and to protect older adults’ ability to remain in their homes and receive care.

Working on behalf of our young clients, our Juvenile Rights Practice lawyers were instrumental in creating the Youth Justice Coalition, a group of advo-

cates focused on issues facing young people in the juvenile and criminal justice system. The Coalition, in turn, became a critical resource in ensuring that we could address challenges and best practices in implementing the momentous Raise the Age legislation across NYS. Passed in 2017 and implemented gradually from 2018 to 2019, the Raise the Age legislation increased the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18 years old and moved young peoples’ cases into specialized court systems. Before it passed, 16- and 17-year-olds who entered the criminal justice system were treated as adults and held in adult jails and prisons—with no option to have their case heard in Family Court. Additionally, our Education Advocacy Project partnered with NYC child protection agencies to develop school stability programs and transportation solutions, and provided substantial input as the NYC Department of Education rewrote the school discipline code.

Advocating on behalf of our immigrant youth clients, a multi-disciplinary team worked with pro bono co-counsel and community advocacy partners to successfully challenge federal immigration policy that unlawfully restricted more than 6,000 young people from finding a path to lawful residence in the US.

Only by working in collaboration with our community and pro bono partners can we achieve long-lasting and meaningful change. We’re only as strong as our relationships, and this year proved that the more we invest in our partners, the more we’re able to radically improve the lives of our clients.

## Expertise Where it Matters

**When life and liberty hang in the balance, expertise matters. Our 140+ years of experience working directly with hundreds of thousands of clients make our staff uniquely equipped to meet the needs and understand the challenges our clients face today. This year, we used our expertise to push for reforms that help dismantle the harmful barriers that can destabilize the lives of our clients and damage their communities. From our trial work, through our appeals and systemic advocacy work, our staff and attorneys truly “make the law.”**

**Expertise empowers us to meet the critical needs of our clients by focusing resources to help them address and overcome the issues they face.**

In January of this year, we debuted our Homicide Defense Task Force—an interdisciplinary team of highly skilled senior attorneys, mitigation specialists, homicide investigators, and paralegal case handlers. Members of the Task Force respond immediately to homicide arrests and provide clients the full range of legal and social services needed for a vigorous defense. This new team is setting the standard for practice in NYC and across the country, and is already saving lives. Here’s how: Our client Mr. B was charged with Murder in the Second Degree for the stabbing death of another man in the Bronx. Despite the fact that he was not in the apartment where the incident took place, the judge remanded him at arraignments. Our Homicide Defense Task Force team spent months investigating the case, locating important witnesses and visiting the client weekly to gather information. Through those efforts, they discovered that witnesses lied in the grand jury to frame our client for the murder as a way of protecting their own family member responsible for the killing. The case against Mr. B was dismissed.

**Expertise propels us to challenge policies and practices that have been ingrained and accepted for too long.**

In a momentous ruling, our Juvenile Rights trial team successfully challenged and changed NYC’s decades-old practice of seeking warrants for the arrest

of youth whose only infraction was running away from their foster care placements—recognizing the significant harm caused by arresting already-traumatized children. We also challenged NYC’s authority to return youth to juvenile facilities for alleged violations of the terms of their early release. Our success in this case forced the city immediately to release a dozen youth in NYC unlawfully held in juvenile detention. Our trial teams also worked to streamline the implementation of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children to ensure that New York upholds its policy of keeping biological families together.

**Expertise guides us as we respond immediately to new attacks on long-standing protections for our clients.**

As our immigrant communities continue to come under attack from overtly hostile federal immigration policies, we are the only organization in NYC with the capacity and expertise to provide them with the tireless defense they deserve. In response to an arbitrary policy change that restricted immigrant youth aged 18-21 from filing for immigration relief, our immigration litigation team filed suit with pro bono co-counsel. In the first ruling of its kind, in March 2019, the federal court found in our favor and granted injunctive relief to more than 6,600 immigrant youth who were given the opportunity to seek permanent residence and citizenship. Advocate groups in California, Washington State, New Jersey, and Massachusetts have filed similar challenges.



“Our clients who struggle with mental illness are among the most misunderstood and vulnerable people in the criminal justice system. I am proud to be part of a team of attorneys and social workers who specialize in humanizing, supporting and advocating for this group.”

**JEFFREY BERMAN  
STAFF ATTORNEY, MICA UNIT  
CRIMINAL DEFENSE PRACTICE**



## Our 2019 Impact

Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society works in courtrooms and communities to deliver justice to New Yorkers. Our direct representation of thousands of individuals every year informs our impact litigation efforts and policy advocacy—providing us with a powerful perspective from which to begin dismantling the systemic barriers that keep our clients from thriving.

We stand with our clients, as we push beyond individual cases to effect change on a broader, societal level. In 2019, we were one of NYC’s first responders in times of legal crisis, mobilizing to use law and policy to fight mass deportations, violence in communities, homelessness, the separation of children from their families, and more.

This year, all across The Legal Aid Society, we forged meaningful partnerships with communities and organizations to launch new initiatives and improve our ability to serve new and existing clients.

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# \$4.52M

taxpayer dollars saved by the Time Saved Campaign, which works to ensure that our clients do not remain in jail because of an administrative error in a sentence calculation. 50 clients were served and 7,381 days in prison were saved.

---

# 34

active Law Reform cases on the docket set to benefit millions of people across the city, state, and nation. These cases span the spectrum of social justice concerns from criminal justice reform to immigrant rights, health law, homelessness, housing, juvenile rights, prisoners’ rights, and public benefits.

---

# 6,343

clients served by the Parole Revocation Defense Unit. The work of the unit ensures that people who return to NYC and are on parole are able to remain in the community and reconnect with family and friends.

---

# >80%

of all 16 year olds arraigned under the new Raise the Age law were moved from Criminal Court, where they would be treated as adults, to Family Court, where their cases belong. Served by integrated practice teams in all five boroughs, our experts in adolescent defense saw a rise in filings and achieved fairer outcomes for clients.

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# 125,127

people served by our Civil Practice in over 50,484 cases across all five boroughs of NYC. Our Civil cases cover a diverse range of issue areas including housing, homelessness, employment, health, public assistance, education, immigration, and more.

---

# 830

general and special education consultations provided by our Education Advocacy Project on behalf of children in need of educational support, resulting in 365 new cases, and the facilitation of 20 substantive trainings presented to community groups, agencies, law schools and advocates.

OUR 2019 IMPACT

## Reforming DNA Case Law

NYC maintains an unregulated and largely secretive databank containing the DNA profiles of more than 82,000 people that provides no protection to persons wrongly included in the databank. This year, our DNA Unit made new groundbreaking case law challenging NYC's controversial local DNA index. In *Samy F. v. Fabrizio*, we defended Samy, who was 16 at the time of his arrest, and whose DNA sample was taken from him without parental consent. Despite our success in fighting his conviction and sealing his case, the prosecution would not expunge Samy's DNA from the NYC index. We filed a motion arguing that under NYS law, because Samy's case ended without a conviction, his DNA should not be stored in the NYC databank for the rest of his life. The judge denied the motion because the NYC DNA databank was not bound by NYS DNA laws.

Since Samy's case was over and he had no further conviction to challenge, there was not an obvious path to correct this unfair ruling. Our attorneys did not give up. The DNA Unit went to the appellate court with a petition for a civil writ of mandamus, a procedure that had never been used before to challenge the denial of DNA expungement. The appellate court granted Samy's petition, and ruled for the first time that NYC's rogue DNA index must follow State genetic privacy laws. This precedent allowed other judges to protect the DNA of those not convicted of a crime and provided a new way to challenge other unfair genetic privacy rulings in the future.

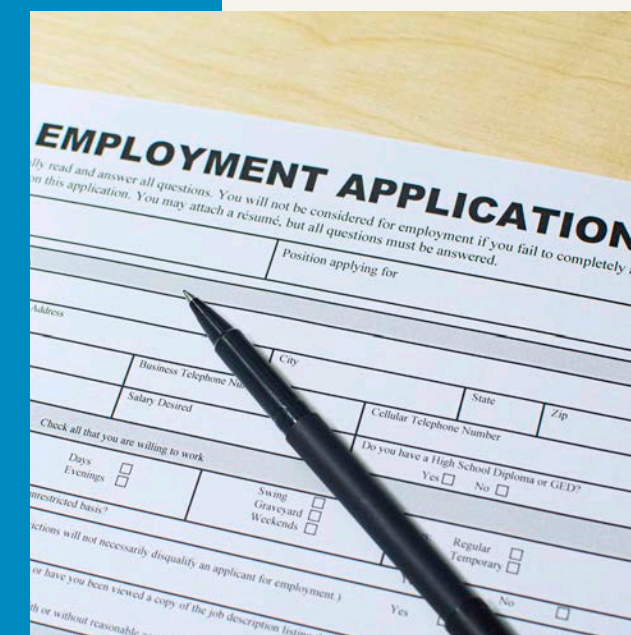
## Advancing Access to Benefits

After being denied seven dental implants from her Medicaid managed care plan, Ms. D contacted The Legal Aid Society through our Access to Benefits helpline. Her diagnosis of epilepsy with partial complex seizures made it unsafe for her to use dentures or any prosthetic. Missing nearly all of her molars, she was unable to eat solid foods and resorted to blending all of her food—against her doctor's orders to eat solid, plant-based foods. We filed an appeal on Ms. D's behalf and argued that her current managed care plan did not act reasonably with sound medical judgment, nor was it in Ms. D's best interest. The appeal included several doctors' letters, a narrative from the client, and academic articles examining the relationship between epilepsy and prosthetic rehabilitation. A dental expert on behalf of the Department of Financial Services overturned the denial in full, approving all seven implants and related services. Ms. D will now have a full set of teeth.



“  
Criminal justice issues  
are social justice issues.  
”

**TIM ROUNTREE**  
ATTORNEY-IN-CHARGE  
QUEENS OFFICE  
CRIMINAL DEFENSE PRACTICE



## Setting The Record Straight

Despite having never been convicted of any crime, our clients, such as Kyle, are often denied employment due to purported criminal history. Kyle was denied employment with the NYC Department of Education because of two open juvenile offender arrests from 2007. Neither had been filed in court and both should have been sealed years earlier. After many failed attempts to resolve this matter on his own by contacting multiple city entities, our Special Litigation and Law Reform team successfully got his fingerprint record destroyed and sealed his open arrest records—clearing the way for Kyle's future employment.

## Ensuring Affordable Housing

Until recently, it was common practice when the rental market was soft for landlords in NYC to offer a "preferential rent" to rent-stabilized tenants. A preferential rent is a rent that is at "market" but below the legal rent. When the market improved or when the tenant complained about repairs, the landlord was able to raise the rent substantially. Our Housing Justice Unit recently helped Ms. S, a single, pregnant mother of a seven-year-old child, maintain her apartment's low preferential rent despite the landlord's concerted efforts to raise her rent dramatically. With an amputated leg and prosthetic, Ms. S has limited mobility. She relies solely on Supplemental Security Income and public assistance, and her rent is paid through Family Homelessness & Eviction Prevention Supplement (FHEPS), a subsidy established for families facing homelessness created as a result of previous litigation by The Legal Aid Society.

The practice of increasing preferential rents was outlawed following the rent regulation reforms The Legal Aid Society helped secure in June 2019. Our Housing team leveraged the new reforms and was able to secure an advantageous preferential rent for Ms. S, along with the peace of mind that this new rent cannot be used as a threat to her tenancy. Ms. S now has a preferential rent lease for a one-year term starting November 1, 2019, with subsequent leases based upon that amount in accordance with the new law.

## Creating a Seat at the Table for Survivors

In June 2019, the Criminal Defense Practice's Exploitation Intervention Project celebrated the first anniversary of its Client Advisory Board. The Advisory Board was created in response to a joint study on prostitution-related offenses and trafficking survivors published with the Urban Institute, which recommended integrating survivor consultants or peer-mentors into organizations that represent criminalized people. The four-person Advisory Board has met with staff monthly, helping to address decisions about post-conviction representation, engagement with outside organizations, and policy efforts. As trafficking survivors, members are best equipped to guide our response to clients engaged in the sex trade. Board members also represent the Exploitation Intervention Project at community meetings, and help advocate for policy reform, improve training materials, and facilitate organizational training. To date, the Exploitation Intervention Project has vacated over 1,750 convictions for 111 trafficking survivors. As one Board member observed, "We're just at the beginning...I know I'm doing something good and have faith in the work we're doing."

## Reuniting Families in the Foster Care System

Minimizing the impact of trauma on children and families is a heightened goal in all child welfare matters. Our counsel and strategy on each case must balance the harm to children caused by removal from their home and placement in foster care with the goal of keeping children safe in their homes. We represented Michael in a child abuse matter—he was eight years old, autistic and deaf. Juvenile Rights advocates fought to have him returned home with supportive services, recognizing that a child with his needs would not thrive in a foster home. But when his parents gave birth to a newborn, Administration for Children's Services filed a petition to remove the new baby, stating that the baby would be released only if Michael was out of their home. Struggling with the unconscionable demand to choose between two children, Michael's family worked with our team to resolve NYC's concerns. His child welfare attorney worked with the Education Advocacy Project to ensure Michael's home was an appropriate setting where he could have his educational, social, and emotional needs met. Our advocates made a compelling argument about the parents' gradual evolution to acknowledge the depth of their son's special needs and argued that the parents had the capacity to heighten their supervision and keep both children safely at home. Justice prevailed, and the judge released the baby home while also allowing Michael to remain at home with intensive services.



“

We have fought to make housing court a just and equitable place for our clients.

”

**AISSATOU BARRY**  
STAFF ATTORNEY  
HOUSING PRACTICE



“

I fight to let our young clients have a voice in court.

”

**HYEJI KIM**  
STAFF ATTORNEY  
JUVENILE RIGHTS PRACTICE

# Practice Areas

In 2019, threats to the safety and liberty of our clients propelled our Practice Areas to launch new initiatives, expand services, and develop strategies to hire new, dedicated staff. Our teams worked tirelessly across The Legal Aid Society to stand up and speak out on behalf of at-risk New Yorkers.

## Civil Practice

Our Civil Practice operates across a network of neighborhood and courthouse-based offices as well as individual citywide units and programs. Throughout all of our offices and initiatives, we provide comprehensive legal assistance to clients with problems involving housing, homelessness, and foreclosure prevention; family law and domestic violence; employment law; public assistance benefits; disability-related assistance; health law; HIV/AIDS and chronic diseases; elder law; tax; consumer law; education law; immigration; community development legal assistance; and reentry and reintegration matters for formerly incarcerated clients.

As a leader for marginalized individuals, we collaborate closely with the communities we serve by partnering with community organizations, social services and pro bono partners, law schools, and the legal services sector. Utilizing the unparalleled expertise of our staff and one of the largest civil caseloads in the nation—working on 50,484 individual cases and legal matters benefitting more than 125,000 low-income adults and children—we identify emerging trends and quickly respond to the needs of underserved populations in NYC. With decades of impact litigation, and legislative and policy advocacy work, we fight regressive policies and advance efforts that significantly improve the law.

## Criminal Defense Practice

The Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defence Practice has been at the forefront of public defense in NYC since 1876—playing a major role in shaping the practice of criminal defense and the criminal legal system.

The Practice's expansive reach spans from our client representation in courts across all five boroughs of the city to our ongoing, active presence and partnership in communities. As the primary public defender in NYC, we are committed to protecting the rights of the most marginalized and disenfranchised people in society. We provide representation on trial and post-conviction litigation on close to 200,000 direct legal matters, while our class action litigation and policy reform work address unjust laws and policies. This year we launched a Wrongful Conviction Unit to represent people on their claims of innocence and created our Cased Closed project to assist New Yorkers with the sealing of old convictions that bar housing and employment opportunities. Our scope as the country's oldest and largest public defender goes beyond any single client or legal matter. Through community engagement and a focus on pre-entry, reentry, and wraparound services and resources for our clients, we do not wait for people to be arrested to help them. We are in communities throughout New York City working with our partners to prevent arrests from taking place altogether.

## Juvenile Rights Practice

The Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Practice ensures the health and welfare of NYC's children in courtrooms and communities. For over 50 years, we have tenaciously defended the rights, needs, and interests of 90% of the children who appear in Family Courts in New York City on Child Welfare, Parental Rights, PINS, and Juvenile Delinquency matters.

The Juvenile Rights Practice specializes in meeting the unique legal needs of young people, with over 200 experts working with over 34,000 children each year to address the traumatic and emotionally-charged cases affecting our clients and their families. As trusted confidants and advocates, our attorneys for children, social workers, paralegals, and investigators provide comprehensive representation while navigating multiple systems and challenges affecting our clients.

In addition to our direct representation, we continue to partner with law firms to advance impact litigation aimed at system-wide abuses within the juvenile justice, child welfare, and educational systems. Through our efforts to defend the rights, needs, and interests of our clients, we drive systemic changes and policy reforms in New York.

## Pro Bono Practice

Whether through individual representation of an at-risk client or bringing groundbreaking class action and civil rights litigation, the Pro Bono Practice provides over 3,500 volunteers with training, supervision, and mentorship each year. This allows us to deliver life-changing legal assistance to thousands of residents in every borough of NYC.

Our volunteers work in partnership with The Legal Aid Society staff to expand our ability to provide legal services to a greater number of clients and communities. All pro bono referrals are screened by our attorneys and legal professionals who are experts in the field. Those same experts remain on the case to provide mentorship and guidance throughout the representation.

Working with professionals from New York's major law firms, corporate law departments, and students from both local and national law schools, our pro bono volunteers help secure the legal rights of low-income New Yorkers in need of counsel who are unable to afford it. In the last year, our pro bono partners provided over 242,000 hours of legal assistance.



# The Legal Aid Society Staff Awards

Our staff is our greatest asset at The Legal Aid Society.

## The Marden Awards

Without the people who dedicate themselves to the fight every day, pursuing our mission to deliver equal justice would not be possible. The Legal Aid Society's Marden Awards celebrate our hardworking staff and honor their commitment and achievements.



From left: Daniel K. Hsiung, Barbara Byrne, Juan Alonzo, Anne Callagy

The Orison S. Marden Awards were established in 1976, The Legal Aid Society's centennial year, to recognize the excellence and dedication of our staff. The awards honor the memory of Orison S. Marden, a leader of the organized bar, a partner at White & Case LLP, and a former Chair of our Board of Directors. For over 40 years, Mr. Marden was a dedicated supporter of The Legal Aid Society, often traveling to the Harlem Neighborhood Office to volunteer as a pro bono attorney.

Each year, the awards are presented at our Annual Meeting. Recipients are selected by a committee comprised of management, exempt, and union representatives from nominations submitted by the staff.

Whether on the front lines providing direct client services or working on critical office operations, this year's recipients demonstrated efforts that went above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of our clients. Marden Awards are conferred on: Staff Attorneys, Managers, and Core Staff, including Paralegals, Social Workers, Investigators and Support Staff.

Below are the dedicated staff members honored with our 2019 Marden Awards.

### ORISON S. MARDEN MANAGER AWARD

Barbara Byrne, Supervising Attorney, Queens Criminal Defense Practice

Anne Callagy, Director of Government Benefits, Civil Practice

Reginald Haley, Supervising Attorney, Brooklyn Criminal Defense Practice\*

### ORISON S. MARDEN STAFF ATTORNEY AWARD

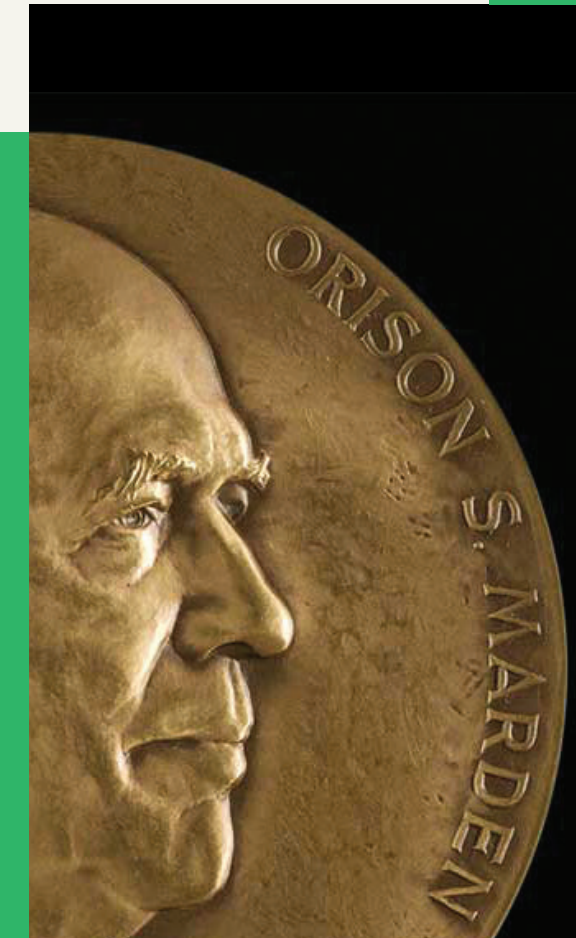
Daniel K. Hsiung, Staff Attorney, Low Income Taxpayer Unit, Civil Practice

### ORISON S. MARDEN STAFF AWARD

Juan Alonzo, Paralegal, Criminal Appeals Bureau

Eric Barreto, Support Staff, Administration (Shared Services)\*

\*Posthumous



## The Sandra Scott Memorial Award

The Legal Aid Society suffered a terrible loss on July 1, 2016, when our beloved Chief Financial Officer Sandra Scott lost her valiant struggle against cancer. Her courage, integrity, and dedication serve as her legacy. The Sandra Scott Memorial Award for Excellence recognizes the dedication and outstanding achievement of a member of our non-lawyer central administrative staff.



Jennifer Lewis, Talent Acquisitions Manager in Human Resources and the Juvenile Rights Practice, is the 2019 recipient of the Sandra Scott Memorial Award.

## 2019 Pro Bono Publico Awards

The Legal Aid Society held the 2019 Pro Bono Publico Awards Ceremony at the Prince George Ballroom on Monday, October 28, honoring over 260 individual attorneys and 41 law firms for their outstanding and sustained achievements in pro bono services. The firms recognized were nominated by our staff in every borough for their exceptional commitment to ensure that no New Yorker is denied the right to equal justice. **Judge Edwina G. Mendelson**, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives for the NYS courts, presented the awards to the honorees.

The Public Interest Law Leadership Award was presented to **Jennifer L. Kroman**, of **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**. Beginning in 2012, Jennifer's collaboration with the Exploitation Intervention Project established a groundbreaking pro bono project representing survivors of human trafficking seeking vacatur of prior convictions. The work has become a calling, and Jennifer is now a nationally recognized advocate for survivors, assisting legal services organizations throughout the country with lobbying for legislation and establishing similar volunteer projects.

The 2019 Honorable Jonathan Lippman Pro Bono Law Firm Award was presented to **Debevoise & Plimpton LLP**, in recognition of its exceptional pro bono commitment to our organization and clients. Last year, nearly 100 Debevoise staff contributed over 4,600 hours of critical legal assistance to clients in areas as diverse as immigration defense, disability advocacy, civil rights litigation, criminal appeals, and the preservation of affordable housing.



### 2019 PRO BONO LAW FIRM HONOR ROLL

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Arnold & Porter LLP

Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

Covington & Burling LLP

Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

Crowell & Moring LLP

Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP

Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

DLA Piper LLP (US)

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer US LLP

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP

Friedman Kaplan Seiler & Adelman LLP

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Goodwin Procter LLP

Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP

Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP

Latham & Watkins LLP

Mayer Brown LLP

Milbank LLP

Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp LLP

Morvillo Abramowitz Grand Iason & Anello PC

O'Melveny & Myers LLP

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

Penn Probono Alumni Consulting, Inc.

Petrillo Klein & Boxer LLP

Proskauer Rose LLP

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP

Ropes & Gray LLP

Shearman & Sterling LLP

Sidley Austin LLP

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

White & Case LLP

Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

Winston & Strawn LLP

# Our Supporters

We are deeply grateful to these law firms, corporations, foundations, and individuals for their support of The Legal Aid Society and our core principle that no New Yorker should be denied access to justice because of poverty.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

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Robin Hood Foundation  
Single Stop USA, Inc.

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Fund For The City of New York  
Bernard F. and Alva B. Gimbel Foundation, Inc.  
The Joseph H. Flom Foundation  
NoVo Foundation

### \$50,000 - \$99,999

Ambrose Monell Foundation  
Assurant Foundation  
Borealis Philanthropy  
Center for Urban Community Services, Inc.  
The Charles Evans Hughes  
Memorial Foundation, Inc.  
Henry & Lucy Moses Fund, Inc.  
MAC AIDS Fund  
Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP  
The Estate of Marcia Thompson  
The Travelers Companies, Inc.

### \$25,000 - \$49,999

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Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP  
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Cuomo Campaign Committee  
Data & Society Research Institute, Inc.  
EisnerAmper LLP  
The Estée Lauder Companies, Inc.  
The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation  
Mastercard  
National Basketball Association  
National Basketball Players Association  
Foundation  
New York Jets Players and Coaches

### \$10,000 - \$24,999

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The Alice Lawrence Foundation, Inc.  
American International Group

Carter Ledyard & Milburn LLP  
CBRE, Inc.

Charles S. Keene Foundation  
Estate of Constance Cohen  
Crowell & Moring LLP  
Nan and Richard Davis Family Fund  
William and Tara Dougherty Gift Fund  
Eversheds Sutherland (US) LLP  
Golin Charitable Fund

The David and Beth Greenwald Family Fund  
Immigrant Justice Corps

The Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation, Inc.  
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP  
The David Kornblau and Susannah Gardiner  
Charitable Fund  
Kurtz Family Foundation  
Nancy and Alan N. Locker Philanthropic Fund  
McCown Family Foundation  
Morgan Stanley  
Sara E. Moss Family Fund

National Football League Players Association  
The New York Bar Foundation  
John O'Connor Charitable Gift Fund  
Panini America, Inc.  
Patrikis/Trueblood Fund  
The Peter Jennings Foundation, Inc.  
Pfizer Inc.  
Phalarope Foundation  
Renaissance Associates Ltd  
Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP  
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP  
Sy Syms Foundation  
United HealthCare Services, Inc.  
Viacom Inc.  
Willis Towers Watson

### \$5,000 - \$9,999

A & J Saks Foundation Inc.  
Babbitt Family Charitable Trust  
Berg & Androphy  
Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann LLP  
The Carroll Family Trust  
Chubb Limited

Debra and Scott Edelman Family Fund  
Edgeworth Economics, LLC  
Equal Justice America  
Gallagher  
Goldfarb & Fleece LLP  
Goldin Associates, LLC  
Goldman Sachs & Co.  
The Green Fund, Inc.  
Patricia M. Hynes and Roy L. Reardon Foundation  
Marjorie S. Isaac Charitable Lead Annuity Trust  
Jack Resnick & Sons, Inc.  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
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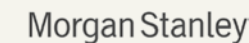
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# In Appreciation of Our Corporate Sponsors



# Financial Summary

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2018	2019
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	26,165,376	11,758,397
Receivables from grants and governmental contracts, and other	41,985,598	69,667,428
Investments, at fair value	24,178,987	24,907,275
Deferred charges and other assets	7,050,314	6,661,377
Property and equipment, at cost, net	5,514,794	4,917,705
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$104,895,069</b>	<b>\$ 117,912,182</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	2,940,058	5,203,578
Loan payable	2,128,222	-
Accrued payroll and other employee expenses	32,249,063	32,324,388
Program advances	513,036	-
Accrued postretirement health and benefits cost	52,375,870	58,332,320
Pension liability	10,187,122	14,999,944
Deferred lease incentives and lease obligations	18,967,803	17,854,821
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$119,361,174</b>	<b>\$128,715,051</b>
<b>Commitments and Contingencies</b>		
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without donor restrictions	(20,144,724)	(17,071,187)
<b>With donor restrictions</b>		
—Purpose and time restricted	3,612,596	4,202,295
—Perpetual in nature	2,066,023	2,066,023
<b>Total with donor restrictions</b>	<b>5,678,619</b>	<b>6,268,318</b>
<b>Total net asset deficiency</b>	<b>(14,466,105)</b>	<b>(10,802,869)</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net asset deficiency</b>	<b>\$ 104,895,069</b>	<b>\$ 117,912,182</b>

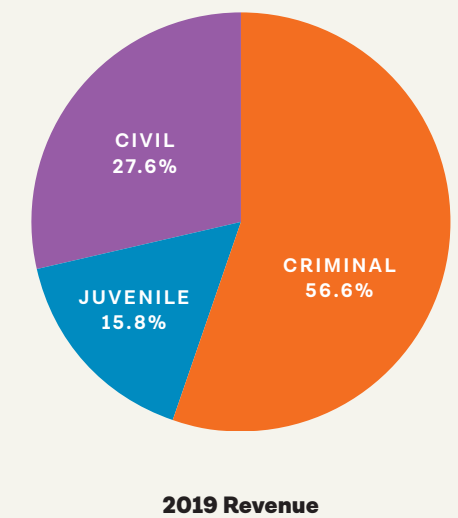
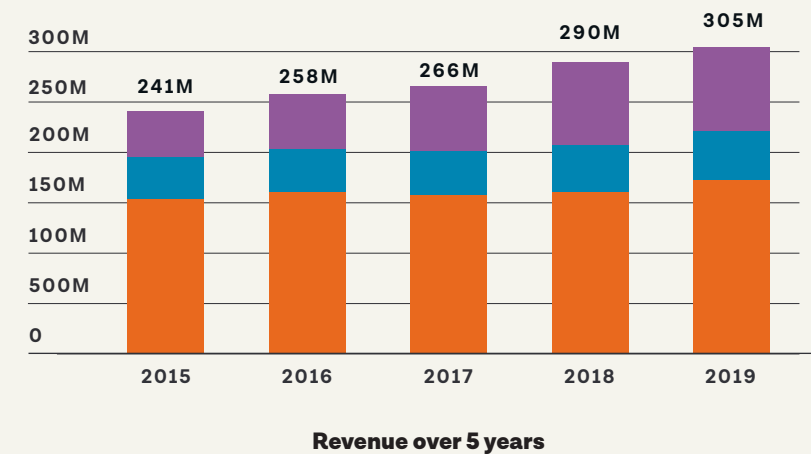
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## REVENUES

	2018	2019
Criminal Defense Practice	160,636,826	172,563,261
Juvenile Rights Practice	46,439,432	47,993,771
Civil Practice	66,927,616	69,093,012
Contributions (net of direct expenses related to the benefit)	14,870,225	14,183,747
Return (loss) on investments, net	358,946	801,850
Court awards	278,010	14,722
Other income	1,659	2,886
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 289,512,714</b>	<b>\$304,653,249</b>

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Criminal Defense Practice	153,103,977	160,074,752	157,633,083	160,636,826	172,563,261
Juvenile Rights Practice	42,322,535	43,031,074	43,607,277	46,439,432	47,993,771
Civil Practice and Other	45,601,159	54,612,631	64,525,412	82,436,456	84,096,217
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$241,027,671</b>	<b>\$257,718,457</b>	<b>\$265,765,772</b>	<b>\$ 289,512,714</b>	<b>\$304,653,249</b>



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