



American College of Trial Lawyers

U.S. FOUNDATION OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS DONATES \$75,000 TO THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF HAWAII

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA (October 26, 2023) – The U.S. Foundation of the American College of Trial Lawyers (ACTL) has donated \$75,000 to the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i (LASH) for Wildfire Disaster Legal Assistance.

The tragic events that destroyed Lahaina and ravaged upcountry Maui continue to reverberate throughout Hawai'i and beyond. Many who lost loved ones, homes, businesses, and priceless possessions, will never fully recover. Nevertheless, there are many people working tirelessly to assist in the long and difficult journey back from this catastrophe.

ACTL recognizes that attorneys will play a prominent role in this recovery, and that access to justice for many victims of the fires will require access to an attorney. The dedicated lawyers working with the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i – Hawai'i's oldest and largest non-profit, public interest law firm – will provide zero-fee disaster legal aid to the most vulnerable in our society.

“ACTL's partnership with Legal Aid is critical to supporting residents whose lives have been upended by the devastating wildfires on Maui, and enhances our ability to provide direct legal services, education, training, and outreach,” says David Kauila Kopper, Executive Director of Legal Aid Hawai'i. “The generosity of the Foundation's donation to LASH will assist us in serving a clear public need — that those affected by the Maui wildfire disaster may begin to regain some control over their lives through the civil legal assistance and education provided. As individuals are able to rebuild their lives, the communities and economy of Maui will also begin to flourish again.”

LASH staff have been involved in the recovery effort from the start, providing disaster-related training and education at local resource fairs; staffing the Disaster Resource Centers along with other agencies; participating in weekly calls to coordinate governmental and non-governmental people and resources; disseminating information through their website and social media accounts; and, directly serving Maui residents with their immediate needs.

In the first two months following the fires, LASH opened more than 40 disaster-related cases. During this first phase of the recovery, most immediate needs have centered around document replacement (vital documents, immigration documents) and housing issues. As the recovery matures beyond the emergency phase, housing issues will persist and intensify, and residents are likely to require assistance with legal needs related to income, healthcare, domestic violence, and consumer issues such as debt and identity theft.

“The Foundation is honored to provide a \$75,000 grant to support LASH in their vital mission to assist Maui wildfire victims, an effort that is expected to last several years and to cost well over \$1M in total,” says David Hensler, President of the U.S. Foundation. “The Foundation is committed to providing access to justice to those who need it most and is deeply gratified to have quickly provided crucial assistance to the residents and businesses of Maui.”

In addition to the U.S. Foundation, many Fellows of the College, from both Hawai'i and the continent, have made individual donations to various organizations responding to the wildfires. These donations will help support those directly involved in recovery efforts, especially including the Legal Aid attorneys working to provide legal representation to those who otherwise might lack access to justice.



American College of Trial Lawyers

About the [American College of Trial Lawyers](#)

The American College of Trial Lawyers comprises the best of the trial bar from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico and is widely considered to be the premier professional trial organization in North America. Founded in 1950, the College is an invitation only fellowship. The College thoroughly investigates each nominee for admission and selects only those who have demonstrated the very highest standards of trial advocacy, ethical conduct, integrity, professionalism and collegiality. The College maintains and seeks to improve the standards of trial practice, professionalism, ethics, and the administration of justice through education and public statements on important legal issues relating to its mission. The College strongly supports the independence of the judiciary, trial by jury, respect for the rule of law, access to justice, and fair and just representation of all parties to legal proceedings.

About [Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i](#)

The Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i (LASH) is a full-service public interest, nonprofit law firm whose mission is to address critical civil legal needs through high quality legal advocacy, outreach, and education in the pursuit of justice and fairness. Though its 10 offices on six islands, LASH provides services to more than 14,000 individuals each year with legal issues related to family stability, housing stability, human trafficking, immigration, access to public benefits, homelessness, and more.

CONTACTS:

Sarah Stokes
American College of Trial Lawyers, Senior Communications Manager
949-752-1801
sstokes@actl.com

Fiedes Doctor
Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, Development and Communications Specialist
808-536-4302
Fiedes.doctor@legalaidhawaii.org

ACTL Hawai'i
David M. Louie
Hawaii State Committee Chair
808-535-5700
dml@ksglaw.com

Michael K. Livingston
ACTL Fellow
808-524-7500
mlivingston@davislevin.com

###