

IMPACT REPORT 2024



Foundation
of the American College of Trial Lawyers

Message From the President



Dear Fellows,

During fiscal year 2024, the Foundation awarded grants totaling more than \$740,000, including 100% of Fellow contributions as well as approximately \$350,000 from the Foundation's reserve fund. Our largest grant was \$150,000 to the Early Eviction Mediation Program in Hawaii, this year's Emil Gumpert Award winner. Read more about this remarkable program on page 4 of this report.

In addition, the Foundation made two \$100,000 grants. One went to the Second Look Project, which enables incarcerated individuals to seek sentence reduction and release by demonstrating their rehabilitation and readiness to reenter the community to a court in accordance with statutorily prescribed criteria. The other \$100,000 grant went to Just The Beginning, which provides modest stipends to economically disadvantaged law students to enable them to accept judicial internships with federal and state judges. Thirteen other smaller grants are described later in this report.

The Foundation increased its grants in fiscal 2024 by over 30% compared to last year and to the average for the four preceding years. That significant increase was made possible by a relatively recent revision of our spending policy and

the excellent performance of our reserve fund. Because of the spending policy revision, **the Foundation, unlike other charities, uses all contributions entirely for charitable purposes with no deduction for administrative expenses, fundraising or any other purpose.** The Fellows' contributions are supplemented by a distribution of approximately 5% of the Foundation's reserve. The reserve also covers the Foundation's relatively negligible administrative expenses. Hence, there is no more efficient way to contribute to charity than through a contribution to the Foundation.

We welcome two new members to the Board, Susan Harriman and Lynn Neuner, who replace two longtime Board members, Kathleen Trafford and Bart Dalton. Kathleen and Bart each served on the Board for two three-year terms. During the past year, Kathleen acted as the Foundation's Secretary, and Susan has agreed to step into that role in view of Kathleen's retirement. Kathleen and Bart will be sorely missed for their many invaluable contributions to the Foundation's work, their good judgment and their unfailing good humor.

David J. Hensler
Foundation President

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Canadian Foundation

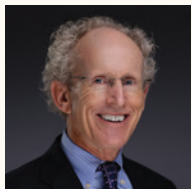
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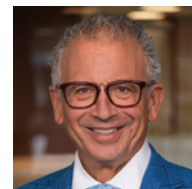
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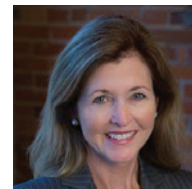
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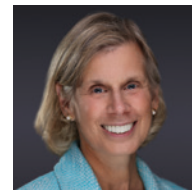
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2024 Emil Gumpert Award

\$150,000

Early Eviction Mediation Program–The Mediation Center of the Pacific

The primary goal of the Early Eviction Mediation Program (EEM) at The Mediation Center of the Pacific (MCP) is to provide tenants and landlords with the opportunity to come together early (preferably before going to court) in a safe, informal setting, enabling them to negotiate agreements that satisfy the landlord's need to recover delinquent rents while allowing the tenant to remain in the rental unit. Experience and data show that such agreements are extremely difficult to achieve once a landlord files a summary possession action for nonpayment of rent.

A large percentage of tenants in Hawai'i are immigrants and English is not their primary

At a gathering in Honolulu, President Bill Murphy presents the Emil Gumpert Award check to MCP Executive Director Tracey Wiltgen

The award will enable us to grow the Early Eviction Mediation (EEM) program and help more landlords and tenants negotiate payment plans and avoid the eviction process. Evictions are harmful for everyone involved. Finding ways to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants through EEM will help to increase housing stability in Hawaii."

– Tracey Wiltgen, Executive Director of MCP

language. The EEM program uses interpreters to coordinate and set up the mediation and to help the tenants prepare to participate, as well as providing assistance during the mediation.

The EEM Program relies on an aggressive outreach system to educate landlords and tenants about how the EEM Program works, including the benefits of an early mediation (before a summary possession action is filed), and using videoconferencing technology and mediators who are highly skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced. EEM Program representatives collaborate with other organizations that work directly with tenants (such as the Legal Aid Society), and with major landlords to help educate both tenants and landlords about

the importance of engaging with the EEM Program early, and especially before any court filing.



A dedicated staff member opens, manages, and schedules each EEM Program case, and a skilled professional mediator is quickly selected from a pool of dedicated independent contractor mediators and assigned to mediate the case.

In the first year of the program, MCP opened 3,050 eviction cases and mediated 1,342 cases with 1,172 or 85% reaching agreement. 90% of those agreements enabled the tenants to remain in the rental unit.

College President Bill Murphy noted that, “By helping prevent eviction through high-quality mediation and dispute resolution, MCP is providing housing stability and family security for some of Hawaii’s most vulnerable populations. The success of the program speaks for itself, and the College is proud to support such a worthy project.”

The Emil Gumpert Award, named for the founder of the College, is accompanied by a Foundation-funded grant of \$150,000 dollars. It is the largest annual Foundation grant, and the recipient program must be one whose principal purpose is to maintain and improve the administration of justice.

Fellows are the best source of referrals for the Emil Gumpert Award! Information about the award can be found at actl.com/gumpertaward. Applications for the 2025 award are due in mid-September.

Brian O’Neill Memorial Fund

Former Regent Brian O’Neill of Minnesota championed the participation of Fellows in overseas trial advocacy training. At their own expense, Fellows have organized and led trainings in such places as Palau, the British Virgin Islands, Poland and South Africa. Following Brian’s death in 2020, several Fellows sought to honor his legacy by developing a program that would provide the funding needed for public service and Judicial Fellows to also participate in these programs. The Brian O’Neill Memorial Fund began offering scholarships this year. Fellows who are interested in supporting this effort can designate that their Foundation contribution be directed to the Brian O’Neill Memorial Fund.



Fellows and participants of the 2023 trial advocacy program in Warsaw, Poland

Donors to the Brian O’Neill Memorial Fund are noted with an asterisk beginning on page 12.

Grants Awarded in 2023-2024

\$100,000

Second Look Project

The principal work of Second Look Project is seeking sentence reduction and release for individuals eligible under the Incarceration Reduction Amendment Act (IRAA) by demonstrating their rehabilitation and readiness to reenter the community. An application for sentence reduction and release is substantial and requires significant time and effort to prepare. The organization provides direct legal representation of clients seeking release; recruits, trains and assists other attorneys to represent IRRA eligible individuals; and provides reentry coordination and support for clients when they return to the community to ensure their success.

\$100,000

Just The Beginning – A Pipeline Organization

The cost of law school and of unpaid internships is prohibitive to economically disadvantaged students, preventing many law students from pursuing unpaid summer legal internships in a judge's chambers. This lack of financial resources excludes many of these students from gaining important mentoring and networking opportunities that could have long-term positive impacts on their legal career. This Foundation grant has provided modest stipends for summer judicial interns. The interns work in the chambers of federal and state judges, gaining real-life insights into professional opportunities in the legal system. Additionally, the Mentoring Committee has coordinated with more than 100 Fellows willing to mentor JTB federal judicial interns.

\$75,000

Legal Aid Society of Hawaii

Responding swiftly to the news of the devastating fires in Maui, the Foundation Board reached out to learn how it could help. A grant was awarded to provide support for direct legal services to clients and for more indirect work, such as outreach and education to those who might not otherwise know how to navigate the legal system.

\$75,000

Redemption Earned

Redemption Earned primarily serves incarcerated senior citizens with serious medical conditions who have served 25 or more years on their sentence, demonstrated transformation, and earned eligibility for parole. Redemption Earned represents its clients at parole hearings and provides reentry services. The organization's WIN program also trains law student volunteers and externs, and it has become an official clinic at the Cumberland School of Law. The Trustees approved a grant of \$50,000 and awarded an additional \$25,000 after matching funds were raised.

\$55,000

National Criminal Defense College

In addition to the \$35,000 the Foundation has annually awarded to provide scholarships for defenders attending the Deryl Dantzler Trial Practice Institute, this year an additional \$20,000 was awarded to fund a new Mississippi Trial Skills Program.

Fellow-Led Programs

The Foundation enthusiastically supports local, Fellow-led programs, such as CLE programs for public service lawyers. Up to \$2,000 is available to support these programs without a formal grant request. Contact the National Office for more information.

\$50,000

Atlantic Center for Capital Representation

Pennsylvania has only just left behind the shameful distinction of being one of the only states with zero funding for indigent defense at any level of proceedings, and that new funding has yet to reach public defenders. Capital cases require hundreds of hours more work for defense practitioners and additional funding for specialists like mitigation experts, yet many of the rural counties are not prepared to support those needs. The Foundation's grant will provide training to increase the quality of representation, assisting in the prevention of new cases ending in death sentences.

\$50,000

Ohio Legal Help

Providing individuals with commonsense pro se legal tools can help them better navigate reintegration. Such work is urgent given the number of incarcerated individuals who lack access to legal services in prison or upon release. Ideally, everyone leaving a state prison or county jail would have civil legal assistance but due to the lack of legal services for indigent clients this is improbable. Hence, creating the appropriate legal tools and resources can help resolve individuals' legal issues and increase their chances of successful reintegration and recidivism. Ohio Legal Help's grant will facilitate the early start of their Civil Freedom for the Justice-Involved Project, a dedicated fellowship initiative aimed at addressing the critical legal needs of both currently and formerly incarcerated individuals.

How to Apply for Grants

A grant application is available at actl.com/foundation. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and Foundation Trustees meet several times throughout the year to review submissions.

\$50,000

Pennsylvania Innocence Project

Scientific testing and knowledge are powerful tools to prove innocence and free people from wrongful incarceration. According to data collected by the National Registry of Exonerations, post-conviction DNA testing has been involved in 570 exonerations nationwide since 1989, including 20 in Pennsylvania. This grant will support the provision of specialized training for staff in DNA testing and forensic science developments, helping to move more cases forward to post-conviction DNA testing that could prove innocence.

\$30,000

Louisiana Appleseed

Under Louisiana law, property ownership passes according to rules of intestacy, creating multiple branches of owners, some of whom have never met nor know they own land in Louisiana. Heirs' property is highly susceptible to loss, theft, blight, and abandonment, causing generations' priceless family inheritances to disappear. This can be prevented through writing wills and engaging in estate planning. The grant-funded project will create an online will generator for legal aid offices, affiliate non-profits, and pro bono attorneys to prevent the continued proliferation of heirs' properties in Louisiana, ultimately preserving and increasing generational wealth in low-income and communities of color.

\$6,400

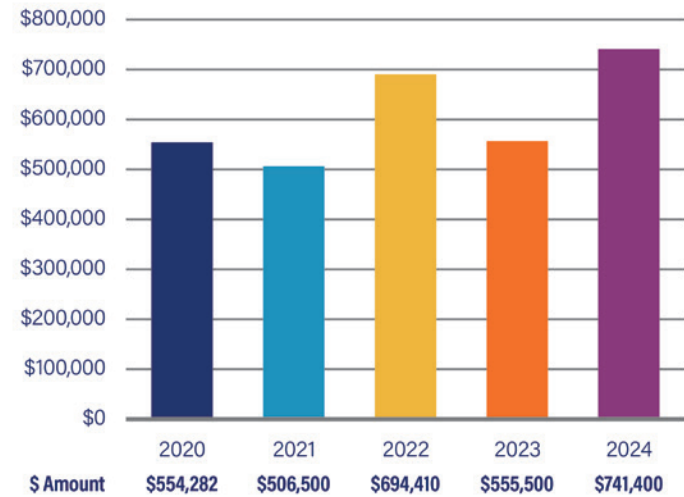
University of Montana

This funding provided scholarships for public interest lawyers to attend the Advanced Trial Advocacy Program.

Financial Data

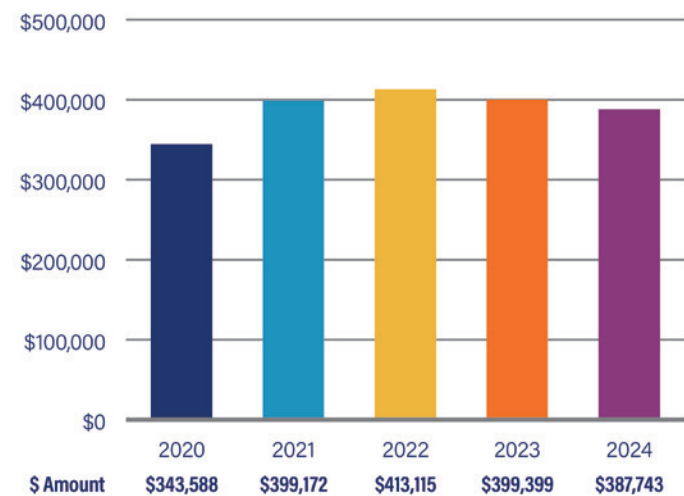
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For Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2020 Through June 30, 2024



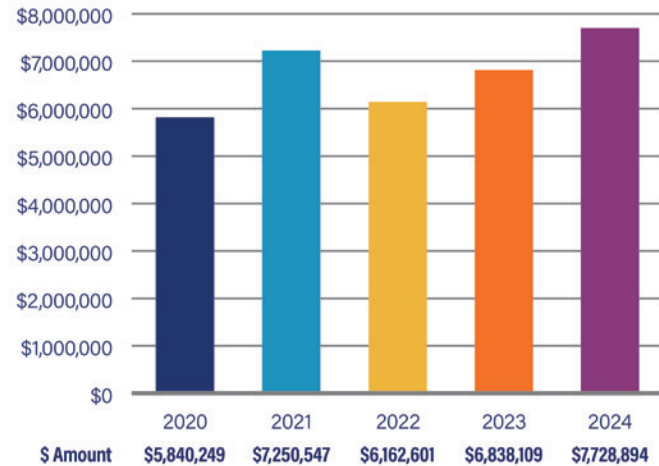
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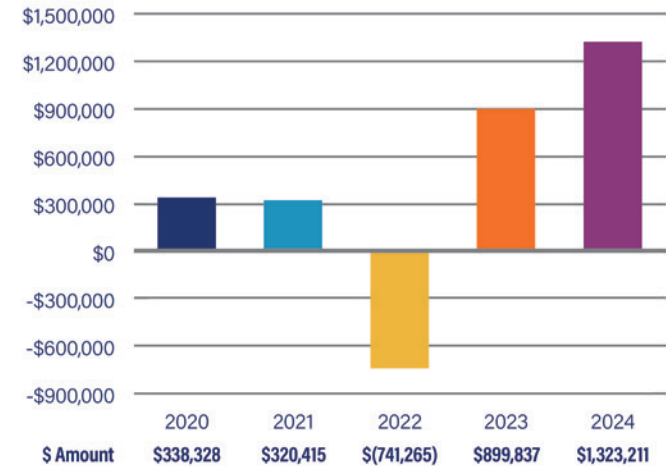
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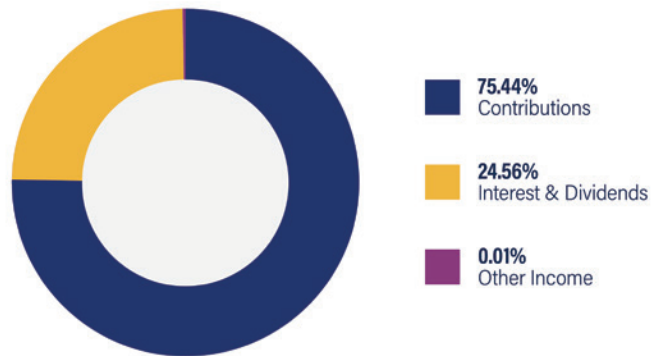
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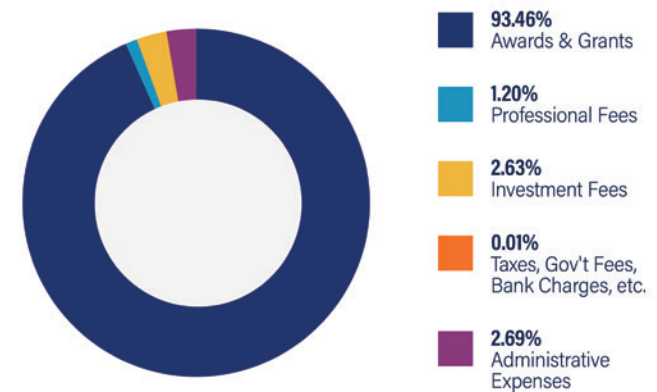
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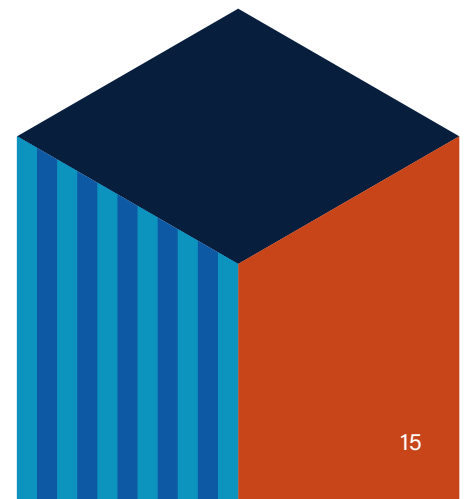
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Dear Friends,

I am pleased to report that the Canadian Foundation continues to make grants to worthwhile programs to promote the administration of justice, access to justice and the training of young lawyers to further create access to justice for Canadians.

In 2021, our funding reached the level where we could begin making grants. Since then, six grants totaling \$86,000 have been made to the following organizations:

- 2023 - \$15,000 to Peacebuilders Canada to update its materials and expand its Restorative Justice Program
- 2023 - \$20,000 to Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland to foster knowledge of the Canadian legal system and educate high school students regarding the operation of the Courts.
- 2023 - \$10,000 to Legal Collective in Montreal to support its Migrant Legal Clinic project in providing legal services and workshop sessions to asylum seekers.
- 2022 - \$15,000 to the Public Interest Law Centre in Manitoba to provide for initial funding of litigation asserting indigenous treaty and constitutional rights and to provide indigenous lawyers with experience in constitutional litigation and law reform advocacy.
- 2022 - \$15,000 to Juripop in Montreal to assist in providing low-cost legal services to people who do not qualify for legal aid.
- 2021 - \$11,000 to The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University to fund an intensive practical course

in substantive human rights, and for students to staff a summer clinical legal services program at the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre.

The Board is excited to support these programs aligned with our mission. Because our grant-making capacity is not widely known, we encourage Fellows to promote this opportunity and suggest potential grantees.

To continue making grants, the Canadian Foundation relies on support, particularly annually, from Fellows. Fellows are asked to consider honoring the memory of recently deceased Fellows or others through additional donations.

**// We make a living by what we get.
We make a life by what we give."
– Winston Churchill**

Thank you to our Board of Directors for their ongoing efforts and service. We also acknowledge our financial advisors, Doherty and Associates, who have generously provided their services on a pro bono basis since the inception of the Canadian Foundation. We remain grateful to Joanne Franks, who has served the Canadian Foundation with skill and dedication in an administrative capacity from the outset.

With warm regards,

Jeffrey S. Leon, L.S.M., FCI Arb
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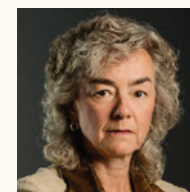
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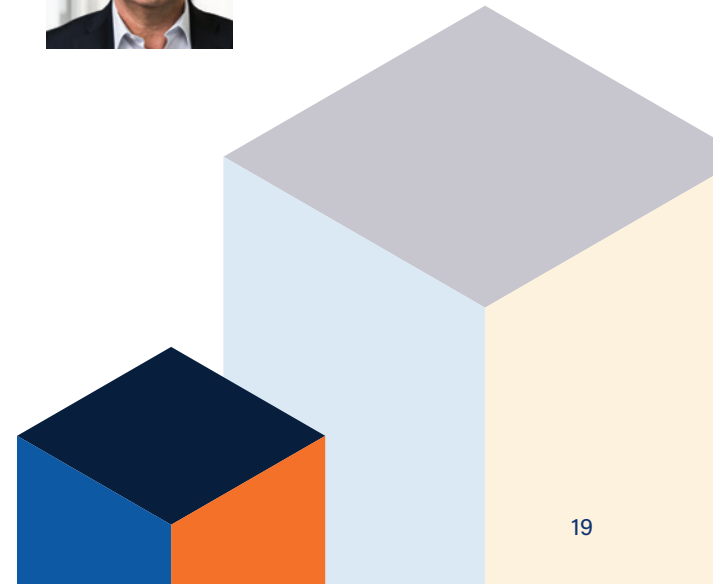
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