



# 2016

annual report

## our mission

To create safe and stable homes and families by inspiring attorneys to fight for equal justice.

# 2016 annual report

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## from the executive director

Dear Friends,

More often than I wish were true, people think of “pro bono legal services” as simply giving a poor person a free lawyer. But pro bono publico (usually shortened to pro bono) does not mean “free,” it means “for the public good.” And the benefit of the attorney-client pro bono relationship is both to the client who receives critical legal support he could not otherwise afford and to the lawyer who performs the service. Because Churchill was right: *“We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.”*

Going further with this thought, I think performing meaningful volunteer legal service forces lawyers to take sides. By “taking sides,” I do not mean arguing a client’s position for the purpose of the claim at hand; I mean responding to the injustice that is always made more plain to a lawyer when she stands with a client who is living in circumstances she would never allow.

And Elie Wiesel was also right: *“We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy...what all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs.”*

At AVLF, we take sides, we sometimes interfere, we make sure that our clients know they are not alone, and we speak for those whose voices are stifled. The quality of the justice we know depends on the quality of that known by our clients.

At AVLF, we start with *why?* – the question that forces us, regularly, to examine our purpose. What role will we play in creating safe and stable homes and families? How do we inspire attorneys to fight for justice? Where will we apply our still-too-limited resources? With what groups can we partner to advance the opportunities for our clients to access justice? And on.

The question we at AVLF do not need to ask is whether we should take sides when the struggle involves the quality of justice. We must. And we firmly stand on the side that believes that there is no justice unless it is available to everyone, without regard to ability to pay for counsel.

In 2016, our effort to promote equal access to the justice system expanded, dramatically. We went deeper into each of our existing pro bono programs, lifted by a record number of grants and other financial gifts from our very generous legal community, and by a Board of Directors and Junior Board that were more engaged and effective than ever before.

Our Safe and Stable Families Program’s Safe Families Office saw 2,911 visitors who came to Georgia’s only courthouse-based, lawyer-staffed walk in clinic for victims of intimate partner violence, an enormous leap from previous years. Our Guardian ad Litem Program placed 32 guardians in contested Fulton County Superior Court custody cases, while volunteer attorneys recruited from the Atlanta Bar Association Estate Planning & Probate Section helped 140 clients at the AVLF Probate Information Center. Volunteer attorneys participating in AVLF’s Saturday Lawyer Program interviewed 428 clients, 381 of whom were referred for direct representation by pro bono counsel recruited and supervised, as necessary and appropriate, by AVLF staff attorneys.

Importantly, we also launched two initiatives that broke new ground in AVLF’s work and in the realm of



volunteer legal representation in our community. The Safe and Stable Families Program created a Family Law Program, recruiting more than 25 of Atlanta's strongest domestic relations lawyers to represent domestic violence survivors who, as a consequence of being awarded a protective order, need a child support or custody modification or even a divorce from their abuser. In the Family Law Program's first half-year, 30 clients were assisted, and 18 clients were offered direct legal representation by either private lawyers (12), Atlanta Legal Aid Family Law attorneys (3), and/or by AVL F attorneys (3). AVL F also hired a social worker – the first in its history – to offer holistic services to Safe Families Office visitors.

As well, AVL F's Safe and Stable Homes Program commenced the Standing with Our Neighbors program, a place-based project designed to address the intersection among housing, pediatric asthma and education for young students and their families in Thomasville Heights. With two new AVL F staff members embedded in the Thomasville Heights Elementary School, tenants aggrieved by their landlord's failure or refusal to make repairs to the rental premises found it easy to access legal support, and, when mold was present or other repair circumstances warranted it, direct legal representation: the 65 private lawyers participating in the SWON Program come from Arnall Golden Gregory, Eversheds Sutherland, Jones Day, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, King & Spalding, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, and Troutman Sanders, and the group receives invaluable support from FTI Consulting. In the program's first four months, 18 tenants facing eviction were successful in resisting the landlord's legally inappropriate effort to remove them.

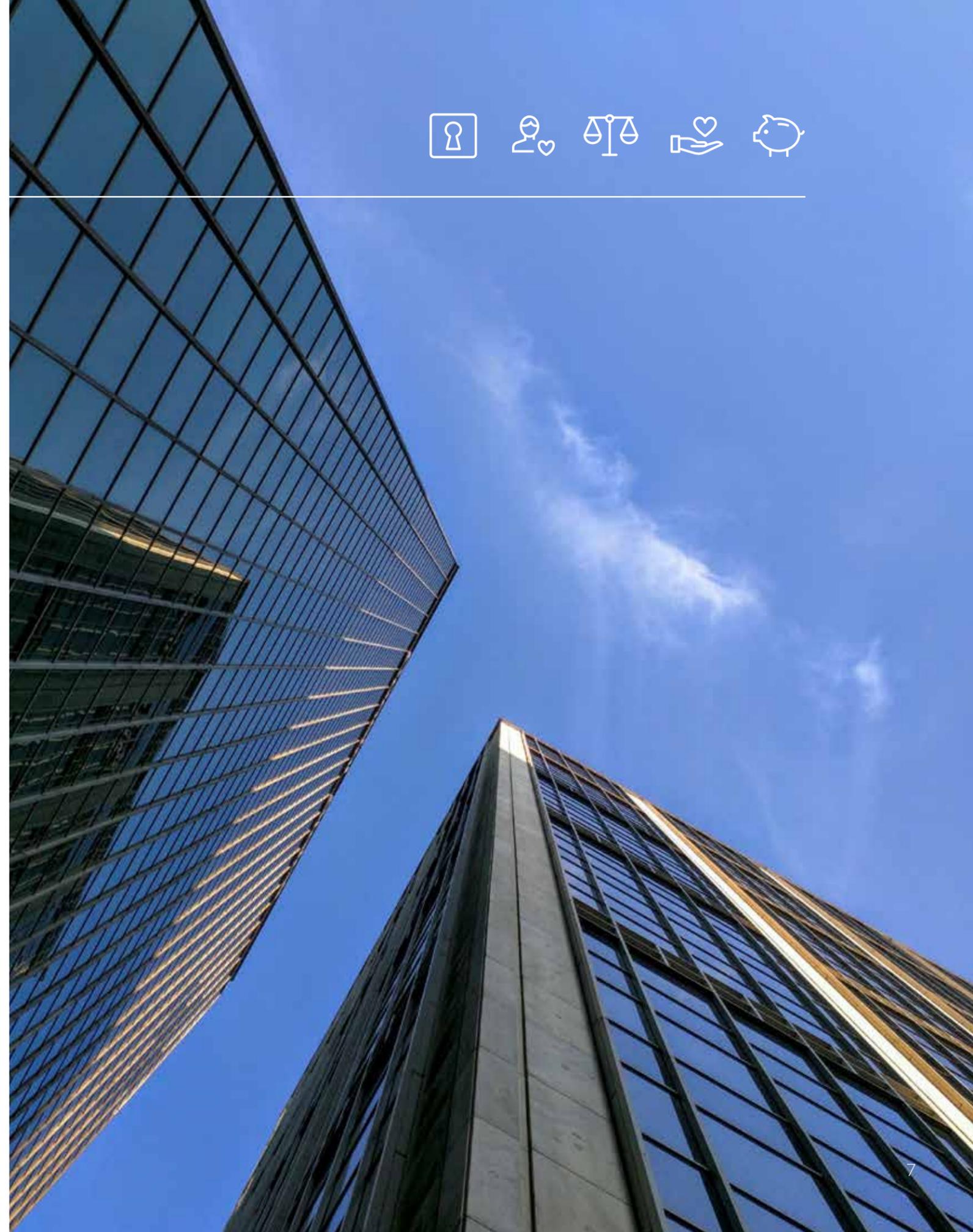
Achieving these outcomes required the AVL F staff to create meaningful pro bono opportunities for Atlanta's lawyers, to recruit and when necessary to train those attorneys in the relevant substantive area, to respond to thousands of phone calls from would-be clients hoping to secure the services of the pro bono lawyers, to administratively match the lawyer and the client, and then to mentor and supervise the volunteer attorney when needed. AVL F's 2016 staff of 15 spoke with more than 7,500 callers, recruited more than 450 lawyers, and connected them with more than 4,000 clients.

We are very proud of the private lawyers who gave of their time and their talent to take sides against injustice, and we invite every lawyer who will stand with us to do so: *their access to justice depends on us, and the quality of our judicial system depends on theirs.*

Sincerely,



Martin L. Ellin





## by the numbers: program accomplishments

The best legal representation money can't buy. AVLF is the largest provider of pro bono legal services in Greater Atlanta. We directly serve almost 5,000 people each year and reach hundreds more through community outreach and workshops. Since 1979, we have promoted access to justice by inspiring attorneys to provide high-quality education, advocacy, and representation at no charge to low-income families with basic civil legal needs. AVLF's staff trains, mentors, and supports pro bono attorneys to assist low-income people at critical times in their lives. Our staff and our programs make it as easy as possible for lawyers to engage in meaningful pro bono work.



## phone calls

Number of calls to the AVLF main line in 2016:



Number of calls directed toward screening in one of our programs:



## By whom are callers referred?

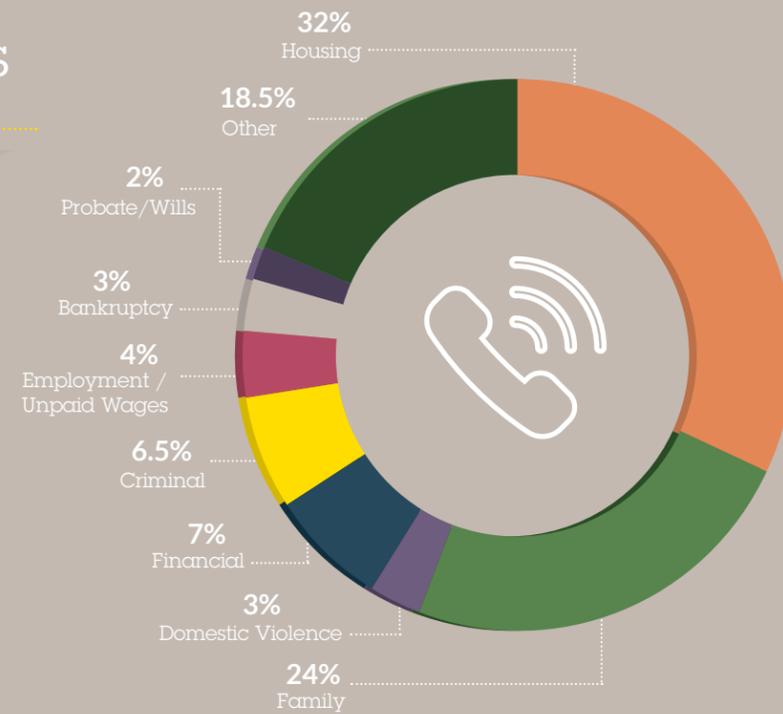
- Atlanta Bar Association
- Atlanta Legal Aid Society
- Georgia Legal Services Program
- Lawyers for Equal Justice
- United Way
- DeKalb Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
- State Bar of Georgia
- Fulton County Courts and Law Library
- Georgia Law Center for the Homeless
- Word of mouth and avlf.org

## by the numbers: program accomplishments

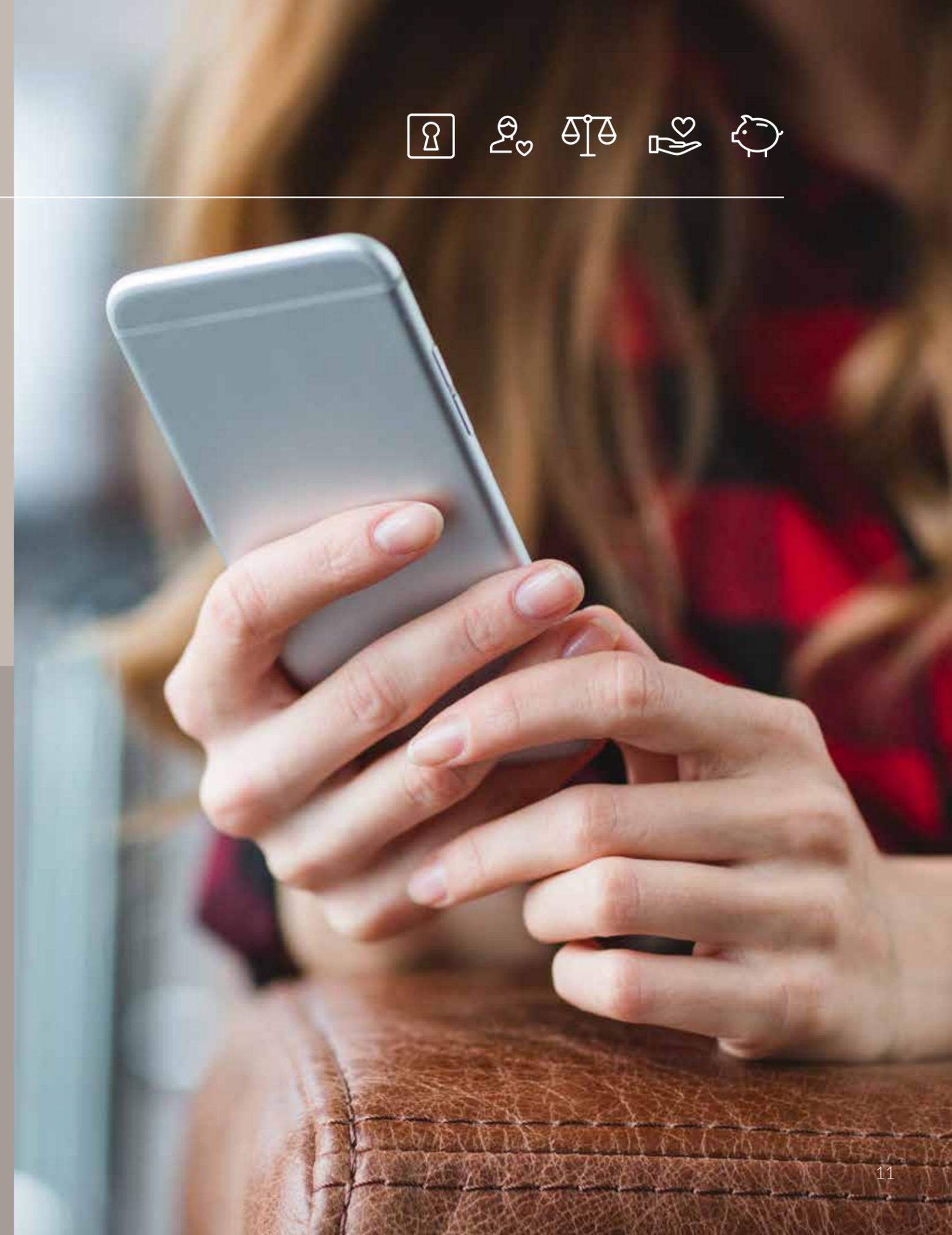
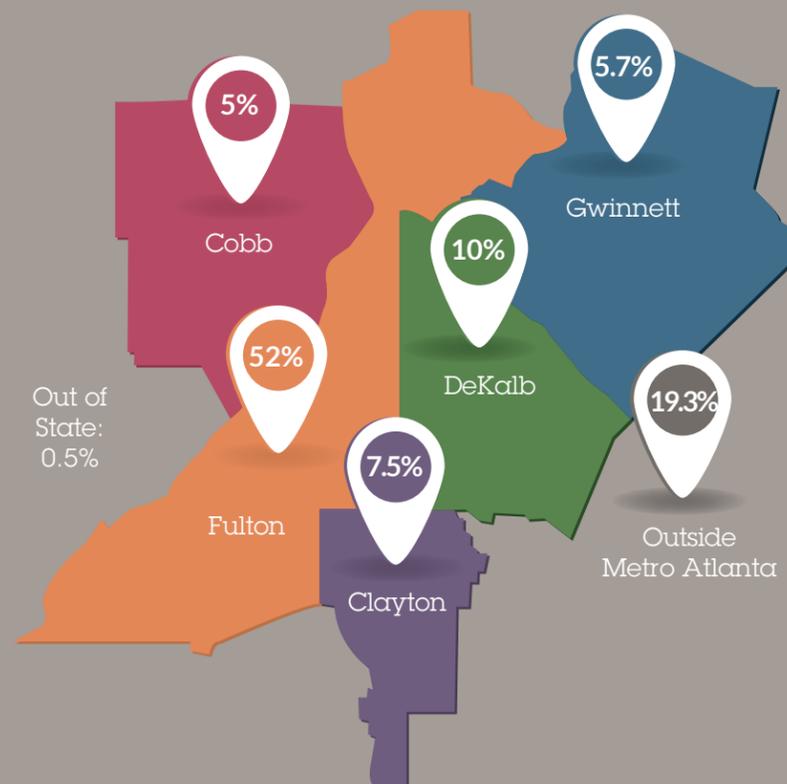


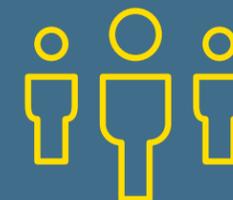
### phone calls

Why are they calling?



From where are people calling?





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## our programs

### safe and stable homes

- Saturday Lawyer Program (SLP)
- Standing with Our Neighbors (SWON)
- Eviction Defense Program
- Bankruptcy Program
- Dollars for Judgments Program (DFJ)
- Low-Income Creditor Assistance Project (LICAP)

## safe & stable homes

### saturday lawyer program (SLP)

The Saturday Lawyer Program provides Fulton and Clayton Counties' working poor with access to high-quality legal assistance from trained volunteer attorneys in areas vital to economic security, including landlord/tenant disputes and unpaid wage claims.

Total number of Saturday Lawyer clinic interviews conducted:

428

Number of interviewed clients placed with an attorney for extended representation:

324

Number of interviewed clients who got valuable advice and counsel:

80



Value of attorney hours donated during Saturday clinics:

\$289,000

Number of volunteer attorney hours (on Saturdays and on AVLFC cases closed in 2016):

5,077



Value of donated attorney hours on cases closed in 2016:

\$1,269,175



Number of family members helped:

945

including 452 children



Amount collected/debt avoided through Saturday Lawyer Program:

\$49,856

## safe & stable homes



### standing with our neighbors (SWON)

Families cannot thrive without affordable housing that is safe, stable, and healthy. Schools cannot thrive with a student body forced to live in unstable housing and deplorable conditions. In Atlanta, where nearly half of the residents are renters, far too many families struggle to obtain and maintain rental housing that lives up to those basic but critical standards. Our children suffer as a result, from deteriorating health to roadblocks to pursuing their education. This is the motivation behind AVLF's Standing with Our Neighbors initiative, which began in September 2016.

Standing with Our Neighbors, along with Purpose Built Schools, other service providers, and community partners, focuses AVLF's volunteer resources on improving living conditions and housing stability to reduce enrollment turnover, enhance student attendance, and improve student health. In the 2016-17 school year, Standing with Our Neighbors is focused on Thomasville Heights Elementary School (THES).

The initiative focuses on outreach and education, health and safety-related products such as dehumidifiers for families struggling with asthma, cooperative efforts with landlords and, failing cooperation, direct legal representation of tenants. The initiative is led by a dedicated Staff Attorney and a full-time Community Advocate who are embedded in the community, and delivers these services by partnering with the city's leading law firms to "adopt" the school and surrounding neighborhood.

In the first 90 days, AVLF and its volunteer attorneys helped 36 families with the following housing stability-related issues:

18

families facing displacement:  
12 evictions were stopped or prevented (representing 18 THES students) and the remaining 6 were still being fought into 2017.

17

families in need of critical repairs to their units:  
6 repair requests were honored (representing improved conditions for 14 THES students) and AVLF staff and volunteers were still actively pursuing the rest into 2017.

14

of these cases have been or are currently being represented by volunteer attorneys from AVLF's Thomasville Heights-dedicated partner firms.

these 36

families

10 of whom were direct referrals from THES staff include 44 children enrolled at THES.

In addition to legal representation, in the first 90 days of this initiative, AVLF:

Distributed

**5 high-quality dehumidifiers, 5 insect extermination kits & 2 smoke detectors**

to residents of Thomasville Heights.

Paid past due utilities for

**5 families (totaling \$1,268)**

to prevent utility disconnections, which often result in eviction.

Contracted for professional mold testing services on

**5 occasions**

all of which have uncovered dangerous conditions.

Made

**2 referrals**

for Thomasville Heights residents to the Furniture Bank and covered the \$100 fee in both cases.

standing with our neighbors (swon) partner firms:

Alston & Bird  
Arnall Golden Gregory  
Jones Day  
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton

King & Spalding  
Nelson Mullins  
Eversheds Sutherland  
Troutman Sanders

## safe & stable homes



### eviction defense program

The Eviction Defense Program provides low-income and unrepresented tenants facing eviction with attorneys to represent them in court in their time of critical need.



Number of tenants given valuable advice and counsel:

28

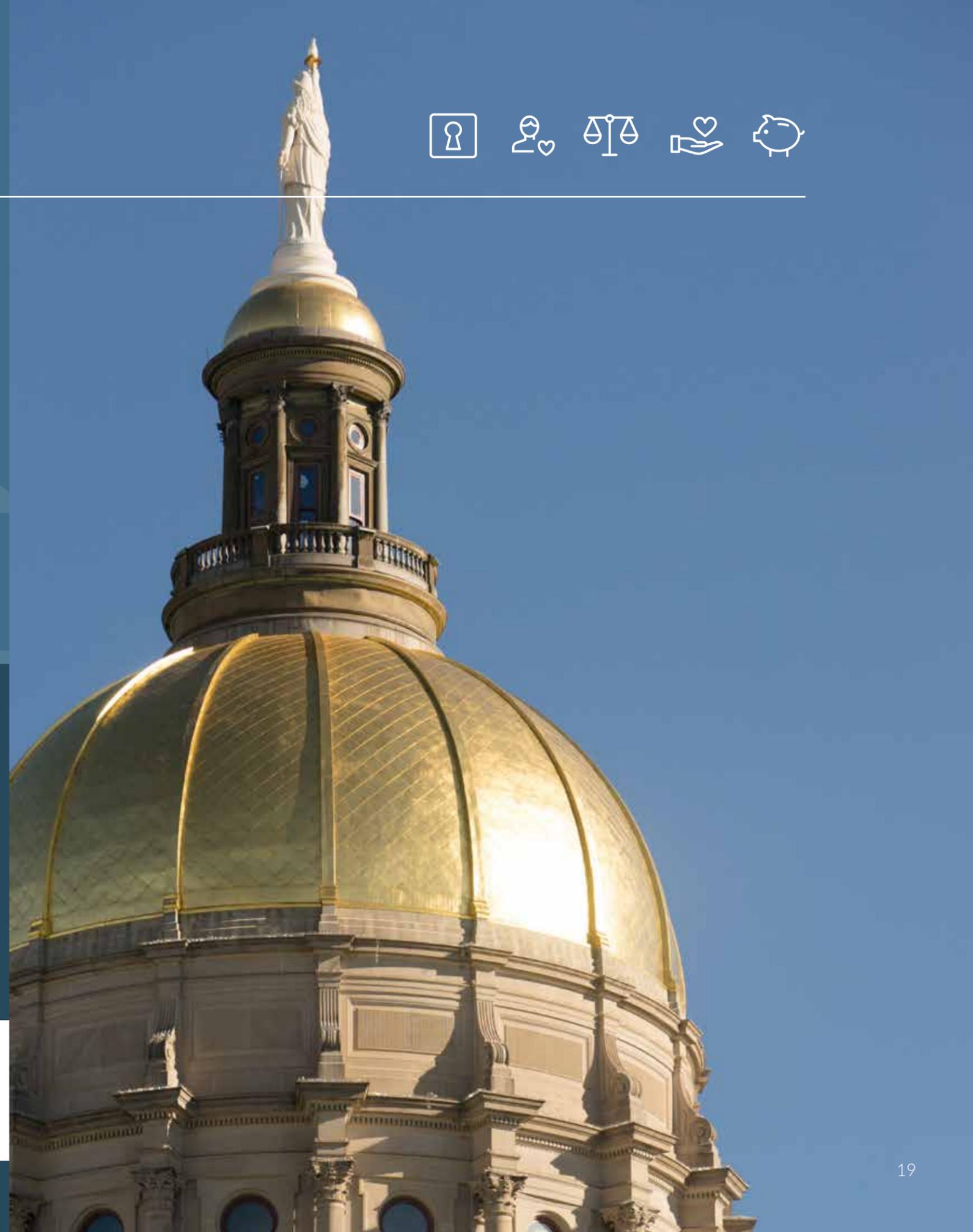
Number of tenants provided full representation to defend eviction on short notice:

53



Amount awarded to/debt avoided for tenants facing eviction:

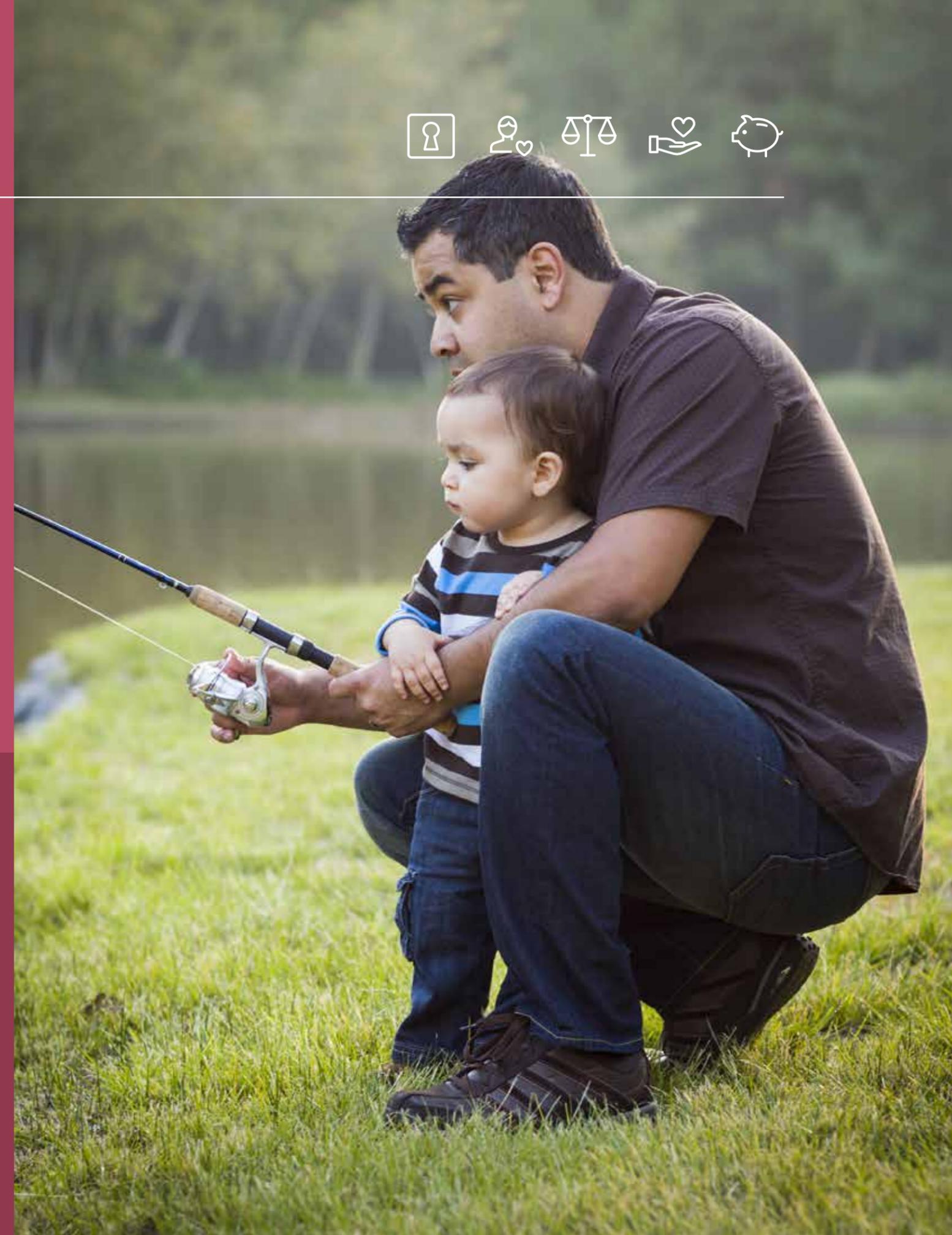
\$34,003



## safe & stable homes

### bankruptcy program

The Bankruptcy Program was developed in 2004 as a cooperative effort between the law firm of Clark & Washington and AVLf to respond to the significant need among low-income individuals for counseling about and, when appropriate, assistance in filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy petitions.



## safe & stable homes

### dollars for judgments program

The Dollars for Judgments Program places creditors' rights attorneys to work on behalf of low-income clients who have obtained a judgment as a result of an injustice done to them.

Number of clients assigned expert attorneys to collect on \$131,392 worth of judgments:

15



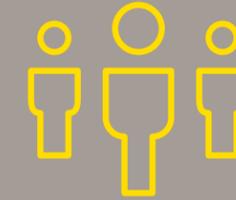
Amount collected in 2016:

\$51,445



### low-income creditor assistance project

Launched in 2014 as an extension of our work to collect on behalf of our clients, LICAP provides expert representation to low-income client-creditors when their employer or landlord files for bankruptcy instead of compensating our clients as ordered. While the need for the LICAP is infrequent, its impact is remarkably powerful when deployed; the provision of a LICAP attorney turns what was previously a complete dead end for a low-income creditor into an opportunity for full collection.



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## our programs

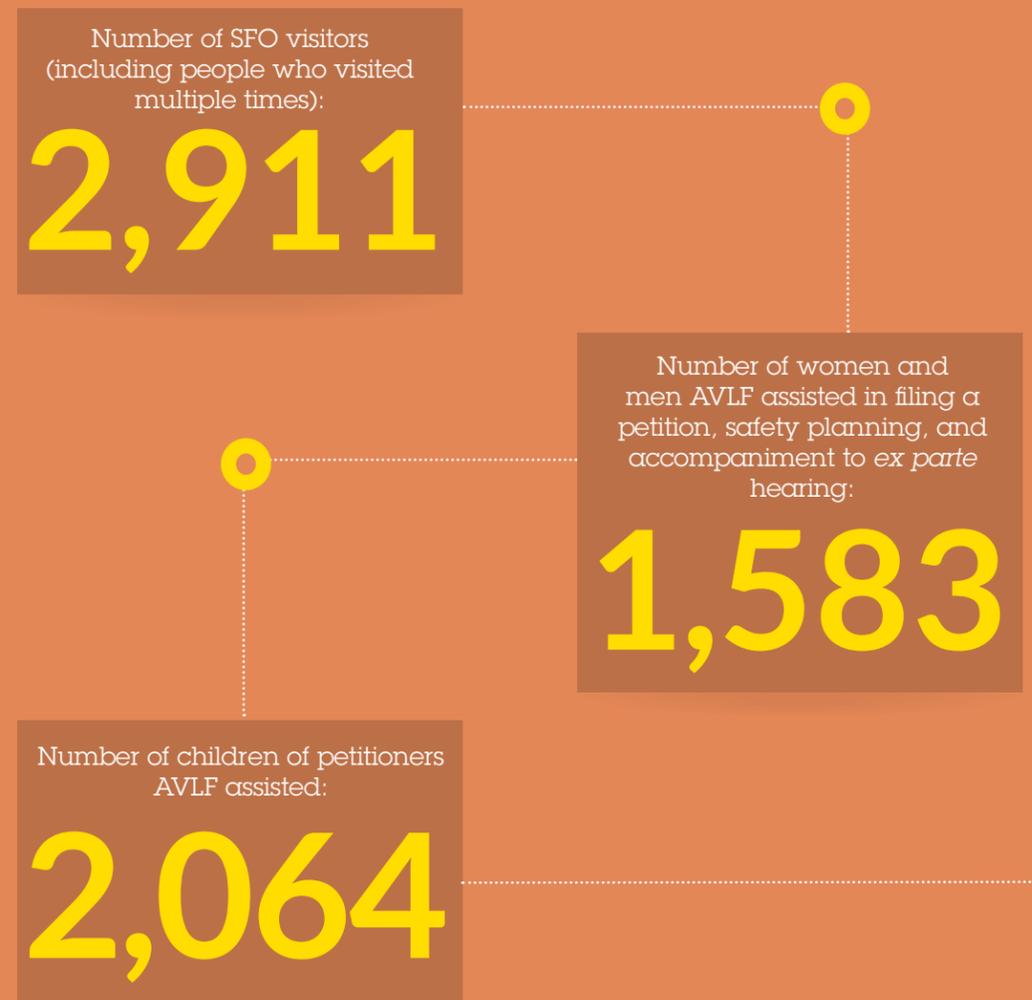
### safe and stable families

- Safe Families Office (SFO)
- Family Law Program (FLP)
- Guardian ad Litem Program (GAL)
- Probate Information Center (PIC)

## safe & stable families

### safe families office (SFO)

The Safe Families Office is Georgia's only lawyer-staffed, courthouse-based resource for victims of intimate partner abuse. Lawyers, paralegals, and law students trained by AVLF in the law and psychology of domestic violence offer legal consultation, advice, direction, and when necessary direct representation in their effort to secure protective orders, the highest protection offered by the law for the victim and her family.



Number of cases placed with attorneys for representation in court:

**135**



Number of 12-month, 6-month, and 3-month protective orders granted:

**99**

Number of volunteer attorneys trained: **80**  
Number of volunteer attorney hours: **1,109**



Value of donated attorney hours:

**\$281,250**

## safe & stable families

### family law program (FLP)

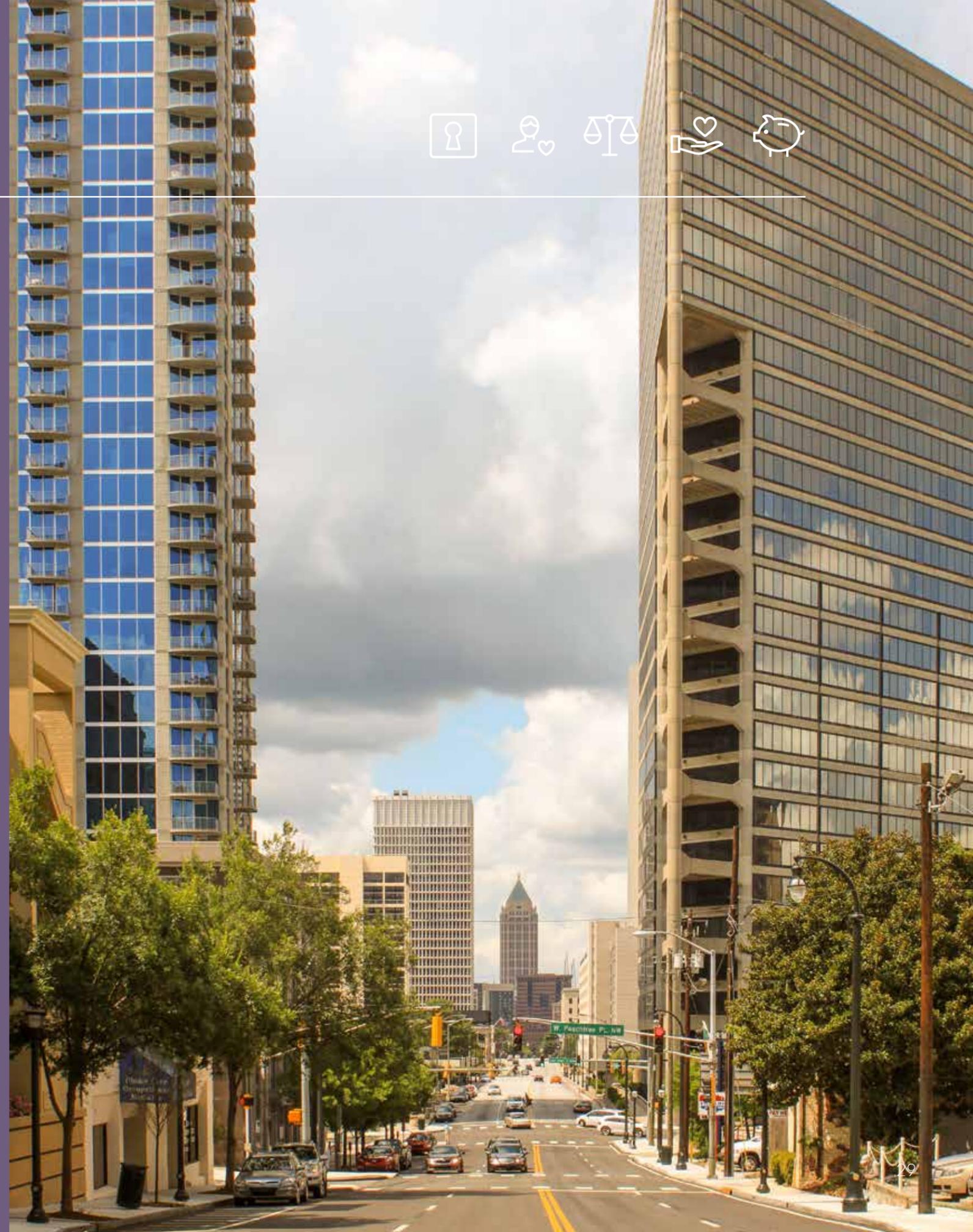
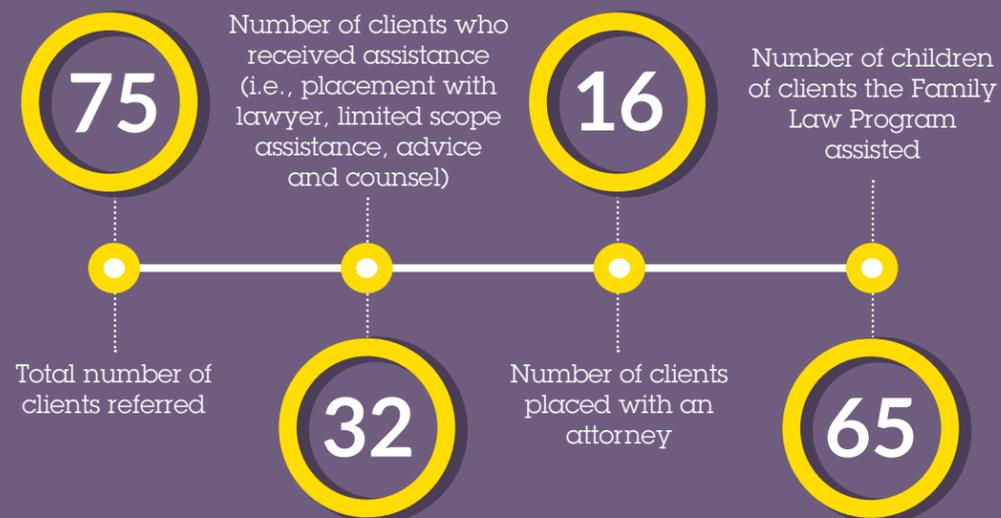
On April 1, 2016, AVLIF officially launched its Family Law Program for survivors of intimate partner violence.

Adding such a program has been a goal of ours for years. Often, obtaining a temporary protective order is just the first step in breaking free from the cycle of violence. Many survivors of domestic violence are married to or have a child with their abusers. Many have claims for unpaid child support. Many are men who have not legitimated their children, and if they want protection from a TPO, they must do so knowing the children may remain in the care of the abusive woman.

While a temporary protective order may give the survivor separation from his/her abuser, as well as child support, alimony, and/or custody, that order is only valid for 12 months. If additional steps aren't taken to permanently secure separation, financial, and custodial matters in a separate family law action, survivors are often forced to turn back to their abusers at the end of the 12 months.

AVLIF was thrilled to receive a grant from the Victim Legal Assistance Network (VLAN) that allowed us to hire a full-time family law staff attorney to coordinate the provision of pro bono family law services with our clients, as well as a social worker to provide social service support to the clients paired with family law attorneys for representation. We offer special thanks to Jim McGinnis of Warner Bates for his leadership in the development of the Family Law Program.

#### AVLIF's Family Law Program in 2016:



## safe & stable families

### guardian ad litem program (GAL)

Divorcing parents often fight over custody of their children. Judges are responsible for deciding with whom and on what terms the children of a divorce will live and visit. To determine the children's best interests, especially in high conflict cases, judges frequently ask to have the help of a Guardian ad Litem.



Number of volunteer attorneys trained:

35

Number of volunteer attorney hours:

650



Value of donated attorney hours:

\$156,250



29

Number of new cases opened in 2016

25

Number of GALs appointed to cases opened in 2016

38

Number of children helped

## safe & stable families

### probate information center (PIC)

At the Fulton County Courthouse, volunteer attorneys working with AVLF provide free 30-minute appointments to individuals with questions about active probate issues surrounding a deceased loved one. Common areas of consultation include the probate of simple wills, the administration of estates, and poverty affidavits.





### Safe & Stable Homes Success Stories

#### Story 1

AVLF met Ms. B through our Standing with Our Neighbors initiative in the Thomasville Heights neighborhood. Ms. B had been living in her apartment for ten years and had six children. She worked at a day care facility.

Over the summer, her air conditioning broke. Around the same time, she began smelling an electrical burning smell and called the fire department; they determined the wiring in her unit was so faulty that they cut off the electricity. To make matters worse, she had a bedbug infestation so severe that she had to throw away her family's mattresses. She begged the landlord for help, and apartment management told her they would provide her a list of instructions for how to get her unit ready for bedbug treatment. However, they never provided the instructions. Instead, they filed an eviction against her for not following the instructions that were never provided!

AVLF represented Ms. B at her dispossessory. By that point, she and her children had moved in temporarily with a family member, but it was overcrowded and uncomfortable. In court, the landlord agreed to drop the dispossessory and make repairs. But it took another SWON volunteer attorney, AVLF Board Member Jeff Nix, writing a powerful demand letter to get the landlord to actually make all of those repairs – including electrical repairs and bedbug treatment.

AVLF then provided Ms. B with a referral to the Atlanta Furniture Bank, which provided her with clean, lovely items to furnish her newly-repaired home. By that point, it was Christmastime, and one of AVLF's volunteer law firms sponsored an apartment full of Christmas presents for Ms. B and her grateful children.

#### Story 2

Ms. S's story is a perfect illustration of the ways that AVLF provides holistic representation and assistance to our clients. She first contacted AVLF in June 2016. She explained that her apartment was infested with mold, and one of her two sons had asthma that was being triggered by the poor conditions. The home also had a bug infestation, a drooping ceiling, and a sinking floor. The conditions were harming the family's health so severely that Ms. S. and her sons moved out, bouncing around between friends and family members. Because of this housing instability, Ms. S. missed too many days of work and got fired. As a result, she couldn't pay June rent, and the landlord filed an eviction.

AVLF immediately sent out a mold inspector at no cost to Ms. S. We then placed her eviction case with volunteer attorney John H. Rains IV of Bondurant, Mixson and Elmore. AVLF

connected John with a forensic accountant at PwC, who performed a damages assessment for Ms. S. In addition, John consulted with a physician with expertise in mold exposure. The physician reviewed the medical records of Ms. S's sons.

At the dispossessory hearing, Ms. S – who was homeless and destitute – walked into Fulton County Magistrate Court with a top-notch litigator, an expert mold inspector, a physician, and a forensic accountant. The client prevailed, defeating the landlord's claim for unpaid rent and walking out of court with a four-figure money judgment in her favor. Afterwards, the client emailed John and said, "You and your experts were so amazing – you made the pain bearable."

AVLF's Dollars for Judgments collections program then helped Ms. S. collect on her money judgment in full. In addition, we provided her with a referral to the Atlanta Furniture Bank, so that her new apartment is beautifully furnished.

While nothing can erase the memory of this horrible chapter in Ms. S's life, AVLF helped her have an even playing field in the courtroom, where justice was done.







Occasionally, we are asked, “Why do you need any money to run what is essentially a volunteer organization?”

More than 75% of AVLF’s budget pays for personnel salaries and benefits. The volunteer lawyers who represent our clients must be recruited, trained, and then mentored by AVLF staff. Staff members also speak with, counsel, advocate for, and otherwise support thousands of Atlantans who call but cannot qualify for services from pro bono attorneys. Eighty percent of AVLF staff directly interact with volunteer attorneys and clients.

Most of the remaining budget pays for rent for the AVLF office and for the costs associated with our five annual fund- and friend-raisers. Our policy is never to spend more than 10% of an event’s gross on expenses.

**In 2016, revenue to AVLF came from three sources:**

- 1. 13%:** We receive a legislatively mandated **add-on to filing fees** in the State and Magistrate courts of Fulton County.
- 2. 43%:** AVLF received **grants** from a variety of sources.
- 3. 44%:** Generous individual lawyers, law firms, corporate legal departments, and Bar sections donated almost all the remainder of AVLF’s revenue as **unrestricted gifts** and/or in support of one of the Foundation’s **fundraising events**. Our primary and largest fundraiser, the Winetasting, raised more than \$600,000, or 70% of the total contributions we received from the legal community.



We are grateful to the following organizations that provided AVLF with grants of \$10,000 and greater:

- AEC Trust**
- Annie E. Casey Civic Site**
- Atlanta Bar Foundation**
- Mary Allen Lindsey Branan Foundation**
- Thalia and Michael Carlos Foundation**
- Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta**
- Cousins Foundation**
- Fulton County Community Service Program**
- Fulton DeKalb Hospital Authority**
- Georgia Bar Foundation**
- Kaiser Permanente**
- The UPS Foundation**
- W.G. Raoul Foundation**
- Victim Legal Assistance Network**
- Victims of Crimes Act Assistance**
- David, Helen and Marian Woodward Foundation**

# our events . fundraisers



## 3rd Annual PurSHOEing Justice

One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. PurSHOEing Justice is a fundraiser designed to recognize the legal issues facing domestic violence victims and the volunteers and programs who help them. Again in 2016, AVLF Board members Elizabeth Finn Johnson and Jennifer Jackson and Junior Board Member Ashley Heintz led an amazing team of women who made this third annual event a resounding success. King & Spalding was hopping as friends of AVLF sipped and shopped the night away, raising over \$45,000 for the Safe Families Office. Inspiring Guest of Honor April Ross stole the show with her moving survivor story. We offer a special thank you to our vendors Jeffrey Atlanta; Stella & Dot - Laurie Tagliatela; Segal Silver; Beauty Counter - Lisa Seals; Massage in Motion, Inc.; the Image Bureau; and Chanel at Saks - Robert Williams.



## 4th Annual Beer Tasting and BBQ Battle



The Beer Tasting & Celebrity BBQ Battle is a collaborative effort of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society and Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation to raise funds - and awareness - to support critical programs administered by each organization in the Atlanta area. The 2016 event, presented by the Daily Report, was an unqualified success. Nearly 800 friends of AVLF and Atlanta Legal Aid attended the sold out June 2 event at Opera, raising over \$100,000 to support equal access to justice in our community. We are so grateful to the chefs who donated their time and food: Kevin Ouzts of the Cockentrice and Spotted Trotter, Andreas Muller of Revival, Sweet Auburn BBQ, Twin Smokers BBQ, and Jim 'N Nicks BBQ. Sweet Auburn BBQ took first place for the second year in a row, with Jim 'N Nicks BBQ taking second place. We couldn't have done it without event co-chairs Sarah Zampell and Ansley Sluss - or without the support of United Distributors, C. Parks Catering, Coca-Cola Company, and Hop City. It really is a team effort, and these organizations make our event possible.

our events . fundraisers



5th Annual Warner Bates Guardian ad Litem Benefit

Each August, the metropolitan area's largest family law firm hosts a party at its law office to raise funds for AVL's Guardian ad Litem Program. On August 18, the beautiful penthouse offices of Warner Bates were the perfect backdrop for delicious hors d'oeuvres and cocktails provided by Murphy's. Platinum and gold level sponsors included the Daily Report, IAG Forensics, Signature FD, and State Bank & Trust. The event is the primary pillar of support sustaining a program that has proven invaluable to the Fulton County Superior Court's Family Division, and as usual, judges, attorneys and other family law professionals gave generously (and celebrated convivially) at the event, which raised more than \$20,000 for the Guardian ad Litem Program and featured a special program honoring Judge Bensonetta Tipton Lane.



25th Annual Winetasting

On November 3, the Atlanta legal community kicked off the 2016 holiday season with the 25th Annual AVL Winetasting at the beautiful Biltmore Ballrooms. More than 1,000 lawyers and other friends of AVL celebrated lawyers' commitment to pro bono service with a party that featured exceptional wines courtesy of United Distributors and delicious food from A Divine Event. This year's Winetasting raised a record-breaking \$600,000. We are grateful to all our generous friends and donors, without whom this event would not have been possible. More than 540 different law firms, corporate legal departments, Atlanta and State of Georgia Bar Sections, and individuals donated to AVL in connection with the event.





**AVLF at the Movies: *Private Violence***



Again in 2016, AVLF at the Movies offered the community an intimate, unflinching portrait of the challenges faced by those who are marginalized. Nearly 150 friends of AVLF gathered at the Landmark Midtown Art Cinema on Tuesday, September 20, for a screening of *Private Violence*, which tells a story of violence, frustration, and sadness that also includes resilience, promise, and even hope for victims of intimate partner violence who choose to stand up against their abuser ([www.privateviolence.com](http://www.privateviolence.com)).

We are grateful to event sponsors Taylor English and Daily Report, without whom the evening would not have been possible, and to our panelists who addressed the ways in which we all may stand up to domestic violence:

**Kit Gruelle**, a survivor of domestic violence, has worked as an advocate for battered women and their children for almost 30 years. She is the subject of *Private Violence*. ([www.kitgruelle.com](http://www.kitgruelle.com))

**Amanda Planchard** is the Director of Victim Assistance at the Fulton County Solicitor General's Office and Co-Chair of the Fulton County Family Violence Task Force.

**Judge Robert McBurney** is currently a Fulton County Superior Court Judge and formerly an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia and Assistant District Attorney for Fulton County. He is a member of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

**Jamie Perez** is the Director of AVLF's Safe and Stable Families Project and oversees its domestic violence program.

We had a busy year connecting with new and old friends all over Atlanta. You may have seen us at any of the following outreach events in 2016:

**Lawyer in the Library:  
Tenants' Rights 101...and Beyond**  
Wolf Creek Library  
January 13

**Lawyer in the Library: Tenants' Rights  
101...and Beyond**  
Wolf Creek Library  
April 13

**Panel:  
GSU Law Domestic Violence**  
Georgia State University College of Law  
January 25

**Panel:  
Navigating Fulton County Family  
Division - Changes in the Court**  
State Bar of Georgia  
April 29

**Panel: Poverty Law Panel**  
Emory University School of Law  
February 3

**Meet & Greet:  
AVLF Domestic Violence Program**  
Kilpatrick Townsend  
May 11

**Lawyer in the Library:  
An Honest Day's Work - Unpaid  
Wage Claims in Georgia**  
Wolf Creek Library  
February 24

**Lawyer in the Library:  
Consumer Rights 101...and Beyond**  
Wolf Creek Library  
May 11

**Emory Law Experiential Learning Fair**  
Emory University School of Law  
March 2

**Carver Market One Year  
Anniversary Party**  
Carver Market  
May 14

**Lawyer in the Library:  
Consumer Rights 101...and Beyond**  
Wolf Creek Library  
March 9

**Presentation:  
AVLF's Housing Work**  
English Ave/Vine City Ministerial  
Alliance (EAVCMA) Meeting  
May 17

**St. Vincent de Paul Spring to Life  
Conference**  
St. Pius X  
April 9

## our events . community outreach



**Community Block Party:  
First Thessalonian Missionary Baptist  
Church & One Heart Ministries**  
First Thessalonian Missionary  
Baptist Church  
June 11

**Guest Appearance:  
Victim's View with Carmen Smith  
(Fulton County Solicitor General)**  
Fulton County Government Center  
June 14

**Mims Park Play Day**  
Future Site of Mims Park at Vine Street  
and Boone Boulevard  
June 25

**Lawyer in the Library:  
Tenants' Rights 101...and Beyond**  
Roswell Public Library  
July 18

**Nonprofit Resource Fair**  
Foundation Center  
July 22

**Presentation:  
Know Your Rights**  
Tenants' Association of City Views at  
Rosa Burney Park Apartment Complex  
August 4

**DLA Piper Pro Bono Spotlight Lunch**  
DLA Piper  
August 9

**Community Celebration:  
Emerald Corridor Foundation's  
Creekside**  
Proctor Creek  
August 21

**Presentation:  
Tenants' Know Your Rights**  
Atlanta Eviction Support Group  
September 6

**Bilingual Presentation:  
Know Your Rights**  
Mimosa Elementary School, Roswell  
September 26

**Panel: Bank of America Domestic  
Violence Awareness Event**  
Southside Site  
September 30

**Atlanta Bar Association Public  
Interest Law Association Fair**  
Georgia State University College of Law  
October 3

**Panel:  
Bank of America Domestic Violence  
Awareness Event**  
Kennesaw Site  
October 6

**Atlanta Victim Assistance Domestic  
Violence Resource Fair**  
Atlanta Municipal Court  
October 6

**Lawyer in the Library:  
Tenants' Rights 101...and Beyond**  
South Fulton Branch Library  
October 11

**Presentation:  
AVLF's Housing Work**  
Families First: Jackson Cluster Parent  
Action Group Meeting  
October 25

**Presentation:  
Know Your Rights**  
Families First/Jackson High School  
Cluster Parents Group  
October 26

**PADV Candlelight Vigil**  
Nelson Mullins  
October 27

**Lawyer in the Library:  
An Honest Day's Work – Unpaid  
Wage Claims in Georgia**  
South Fulton Branch Library  
November 8

**Presentation:  
Know Your Rights**  
Lakewood St. Vincent de Paul Journey  
Program  
December 1

**2016 Winter Swearing In Ceremony**  
Fulton County Government Center  
December 2





**Safe Families Office Volunteer of the Year:**

**Richard G. Farnsworth, Farnsworth Law LLC**

Richard Farnsworth has been volunteering through AVLF to represent survivors of domestic violence in their evidentiary hearings for years now. Since 2015, he has accepted at least 14 domestic violence case referrals from AVLF. Richard is so experienced in representing survivors of domestic violence that he is frequently called upon by AVLF to take cases with very little prep time and he typically takes such cases with no hesitation. Richard's style and demeanor tend to put survivors of domestic violence at ease as they prepare for their hearings and his familiarity with this area of law ensures consent agreements are wisely crafted and hearings are efficiently conducted. Richard is a vital part of the Safe Families Office volunteer attorney family and we are incredibly grateful for his time and devotion to this work.

**Safe and Stable Homes Firm of the Year:**

**PwC**

The tenants who come to AVLF for help are often in dire straits: their landlords' negligence has led to mold, flooding, and other conditions that have destroyed their personal belongings. Other landlords illegally evict tenants, dragging their property into the front yard or throwing it off the balcony or into dumpsters. In such cases, the forensic accountants and other professionals at PwC provide damages assessments. This invaluable assistance allows the volunteer attorney to structure the initial demand and subsequent negotiations, and – when necessary – to proceed to court with the confidence that a PwC accountant will be there as well to testify about the tenant's damages. In addition, PwC routinely attends AVLF's Saturday Lawyer Day clinic to encourage our volunteers to call on them for help. For its commitment to AVLF's mission, the high quality of its work, and its great help in leveling the playing field for our clients, PwC is the Safe and Stable Homes Firm of the Year.

**Safe and Stable Homes Volunteer of the Year:**

**John H. Rains IV, Bondurant, Mixson and Elmore**

John H. Rains IV of Bondurant, Mixson and Elmore has earned the distinction of the Safe & Stable Homes Volunteer of the Year for his strong commitment to AVLF's Eviction Defense Program. Over the past year, John has been a zealous advocate for numerous AVLF clients in eviction defense cases. But the depth of his commitment was illustrated most profoundly in a particular case involving a single mother of two who endured a horrific mold infestation, leading to property damage, illness, and eventual homelessness. John brought to this case his top-notch litigation and strategy skills. On the day of the hearing he presented testimony from an expert mold inspector, a physician, and a PwC accountant. Thanks to him, the client prevailed, defeating the landlord's claim for unpaid rent and walking out of court with a four-figure money judgment in her favor. Read more about this amazing success story on page 34.

## our people

### board of directors

“While it is privilege to be able to use your time, skills, and resources to help someone else reach his or her fullest potential, what you learn through volunteerism is that it really enriches your life as well. We have more in common with our clients than we may sometimes think. We all have the same needs. We all want to be valued as human beings, and to contribute in meaningful ways. AVLF helps ensure that every person is able to live a life of dignity, and it's a joy to be a part of that.”

– Dena Hong, 2016 AVLF Board of Directors President

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## our people



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Ayanna Jones-Lightsy  
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Christal Reynolds  
*Community Advocate, Standing with Our Neighbors*

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Matilde Davis  
*Program Coordinator, Safe and Stable Homes*

Lilli Crowe  
*Program Coordinator, Safe and Stable Families*

Kenisha Wade  
*Paralegal, Safe and Stable Homes*

Jon Reading  
*Office Manager*

Katie King  
*Administrative Assistant*



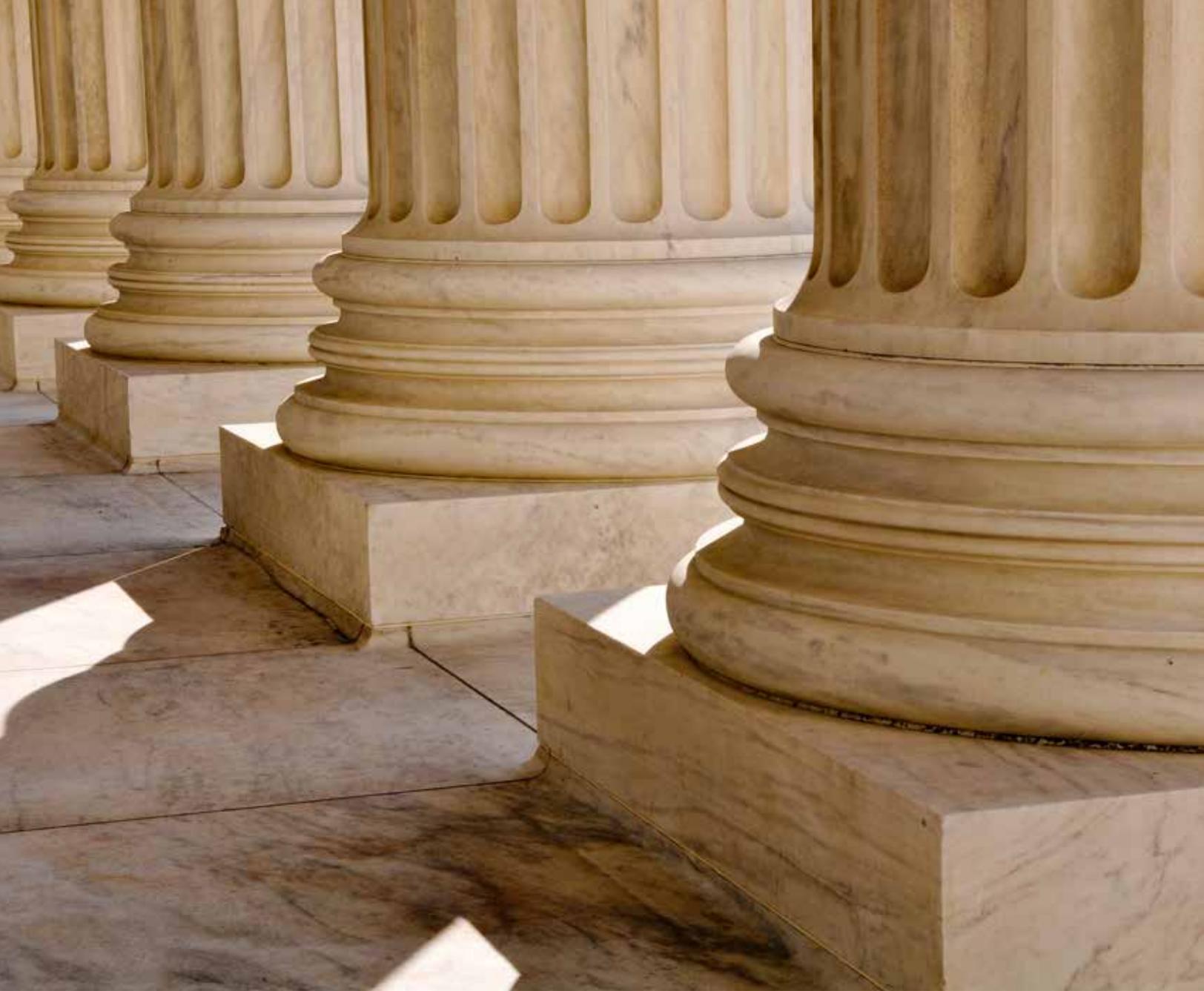
## how you can help

Through AVLF alone, lawyers in Atlanta give more than \$2,000,000 of high quality, free legal services to low-income residents of our city every year. By standing up for a victim of intimate partner violence, protecting a tenant whose landlord refuses to honor contracts and housing codes, representing an employee denied wages or advising a young woman in the wake of her mother's death, lawyers give 5,000 or more Atlantans each year an entry to an otherwise inaccessible legal system.

Atlanta is not just a series of streets we navigate to get to our work or our homes. This is our community, and the people who make up our community are our neighbors, our friends, and our responsibility. There is a direct link between your generosity and our ability to deliver worthy pro bono programs that save homes, save lives, and promote safe and stable families.

Stand up with us. Visit [avlf.org](http://avlf.org) today to sign up as a volunteer or to donate.





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