Our Mission

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

With pride, we present our 2017 Annual Report. We hope that you will enjoy reading how, through the power of partnership, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation is directing the generosity and abundance of the Atlanta community into the provision of meaningful legal help for those who have too little. The Report also makes clear how AVLF’s pro bono programs will only result in safe and stable homes and families if we are able both to maintain our focused efforts and convince our partners to sustain their strong support.

In 2017, AVLF enjoyed growth beyond the dreams of even our very ambitious 2020 Strategic Plan, which we laid out only three years ago. We expanded our staff to serve a record number of clients and place a record number of cases. We enhanced the capabilities of the Safe Families Office to help survivors of intimate partner violence, from the initial protective order to true safety. We continued the deeply effective and successful model of the Saturday Lawyer Program to help workers receive earned wages and tenants address dangerously inadequate housing conditions. Our Standing with Our Neighbors program expanded the work of AVLF’s school-based lawyers and community advocates into, now, seven Atlanta Public Schools.

We are grateful beyond easy words for the spirit of generosity and compassion that drives our friends in every part of Atlanta, who know that the purpose of partnership is to accomplish more than we can do alone.

Our partners are many. They include the lawyers of this city who seek meaningful pro bono opportunities, the funders who lift our community through their gifts, the courts that promote justice, the school system to whom we entrust our children, and our fabulously effective sister service providers. Each of these partners has generated a series of legal responses that are significantly beyond that which was accomplished before we and our partners formed this alliance. We understand that we are at the beginning of what is possible, and that we are able to reach through to the next step of the struggle only with the help of the breadth of this community.

On behalf of those who are resource-poor and have no access to justice except through the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, we call upon you to add to the common good.

For the sake of those who stand alone, we ask you to stand with us.

Most sincerely,

[Signature]

Martin L. Ellin

From the Executive Director
AVLF in 2017: Answering the Call

Our Mission

Our Fight for Safety and Stability - Since its founding in 1979, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation has provided free, high quality legal services to the underrepresented in Atlanta. The need is great. Our neighbors who seek our help each year are at critical times in their lives, and they need the power and expertise of an attorney to help them navigate the courts.

We directly serve nearly 5,000 Atlantans each year and reach hundreds more through community outreach and workshops. Our staff trains, mentors, and supports pro bono attorneys to assist low-income Atlanta residents in critical situations. We uplift and empower our neighbors in need.

National Problems, Local Action - Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation seeks to tackle national problems—like intimate partner violence and housing instability—by taking local action in our community. We seek to inspire Atlanta lawyers to use their expertise to the betterment of our city, promoting safer and more stable homes and families.

Our programs provide extensive legal assistance, education, and advocacy for at-risk individuals in Atlanta - at no cost. We provide both legal support and holistic, community-focused services to those in need. Our programs cover family law and domestic violence cases, landlord/tenant disputes, evictions, unpaid wages, and probate issues.

Growth in 2017 - This year, we celebrated unprecedented growth as an organization—growth that allows us to provide better services, create more efficient processes, and have greater meaningful impact in Atlanta.

The Phones

Our phones are open from 9:00am to 1:00pm, Monday through Thursday, to assist Atlantans in finding the legal help they need.

Whether we offer direct representation by one of our hundreds of volunteer attorneys, thoughtful and thorough advice by one of our staff attorneys, or a tailored referral to the best available resource, we strive to be the last call someone has to make to get help.

814 calls directed toward screening in one of our programs
From WHERE are people calling?

Fulton 57%
Clayton 7.3%
Cobb 4.8%
DeKalb 11%
Gwinnett 4.8%
Statewide (Outside Metro Atlanta) 14.7%
Out of State 0.5%

*This number does not include calls to our place-based satellite offices.

We saw a 10% increase in number of clients served from 2016 to 2017
We added 13 new staff members. (We had 15 staff total in 2016!)

Our programs grew:
We went from 1 to 7 schools in the Standing with Our Neighbors program.
The Safe Families Office had a 13% increase in traffic.
Our programs are innovative, community-conscious, and nationally recognized for their impact. We strive to make it as easy as possible for lawyers to engage in meaningful pro bono work – and through this, we change lives.

**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
- Georgia Legal Services Program
- United Way
- Atlanta Legal Aid Society
- Lawyers for Equal Justice
- 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

**WHY are they calling?**

- Housing: 30.2%
- Other: 26.3%
- Probate & Wills: 3%
- Bankruptcy: 2.3%
- Unemployment & Unpaid Wages: 1.2%
- Criminal: 7%
- Financial: 6.6%
- Domestic Violence: 3.1%
- Family: 20.3%
- Other: 3%

---

**Our Programs**

**Safe and Stable Homes**
- Saturday Lawyer Program (SLP)
- Standing with Our Neighbors (SWON)
- Eviction Defense
- Bankruptcy Program
- Dollars for Judgments (DFJ)
- Probate Information Center (PIC)

**Safe and Stable Families**
- Safe Families Office (SFO)
- Family Law Program (FLP)
- Guardian ad Litem (GAL)
The Cochrans, a family of four, were living in an 18-unit building in Atlanta’s English Avenue neighborhood. Their apartment was owned by an inexcusably negligent landlord, who allowed the apartment to fall into complete disrepair before attempting to evict the Cochran family.

The apartment had no gas, due to a leak. And no water, either – the main water pipe had been stolen. There were no locks on the front or back door. Mold flourished on the walls — enough to labor one’s breath after only a few minutes inside. There was no electricity in the bedroom, only an extension cord that snaked along the wall, feebly taped. An open area in the front of the building was backed up with leaking sewage.

Jeff Nix, a partner at Taylor English, enthusiastically agreed to represent the Cochrans in their pursuit of justice.

Ms. Cochran didn’t have to face the court alone: flanked by two attorneys, two damages experts, a mold expert, two witnesses from the apartment building, and an officer with the Atlanta Police Department’s Code Enforcement Section, Ms. Cochran walked into the courtroom with an army.

The trial lasted four hours.

On January 5, 2018, in an eight-page decision, Hon. Linda Borsky ruled in favor of the Cochran family.

The judge awarded the Cochrans over $18,000.

“One of our attorneys came in this morning raving about what a great experience he had Saturday with this group called AVL. Glad to hear things are still flying high there.” – Volunteer paralegal for Saturday Lawyer Program

The Safe and Stable Homes Project houses a variety of programs that address various housing and finance issues of low-income Atlanta residents. The project seeks to stabilize Atlanta homes – because stability leads to security, and security leads to opportunity and growth.
405 interviews conducted at the Saturday Lawyer Clinic

317 clients placed with an attorney for extended representation

88 clients received valuable advice and counsel

4,320 attorney hours donated (on Saturdays and on cases closed in 2017)

$1,080,000 Value of attorney hours donated (during Saturday clinics and on cases closed in 2017)

$240,858 Amount collected/debt avoided through Saturday Lawyer Program cases closed in 2017

1,047 family members assisted, including 467 children

Safe and Stable Homes

Saturday Lawyer Program (SLP)

For forty years, the Saturday Lawyer Program – AVLF’s oldest and largest program, which was created before the Foundation even existed – has provided low-income Atlantans with access to volunteer attorneys. We serve our community in areas vital to economic security, including landlord/tenant disputes and unpaid wage claims.

“I felt I had the best person to listen to my problem. She went above and beyond to solve what I asked her to do.” – Saturday Lawyer Program client
Safe and 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.

SWON is a place-based program that seeks to overhaul the typical legal services model in favor of something more accessible and equitable. AVLF partners with schools and other community allies to focus our volunteer resources on improving living conditions and housing stability in low-income neighborhoods – all to improve resident health, reduce school enrollment turnover, and enhance student attendance and performance.

Our program staff is embedded within neighborhoods to stop housing instability early and work as a first responder when problems do arise. The initiative is led by dedicated staff attorneys and full-time community advocates who are embedded in the community. We deliver these services by partnering with the city’s leading law firms to “adopt” each school and surrounding neighborhoods.

“If you all had not been here, it would have taken another year for the issues to be resolved. My kids and I deserve to live in a place that feels like home.” – Standing with Our Neighbors client

This year, Standing with Our Neighbors has expanded from 1 to 7 schools.

1. Thomasville Heights Elementary School (first in the SWON program)
2. Slater Elementary School
3. Price Middle School
4. Barack and Michelle Obama Academy
5. Dunbar Elementary School
6. Kindezi at Gideons Elementary School
7. Hollis Innovation Academy

In 2017, AVLF and its volunteer attorneys opened 118 cases for Standing with Our Neighbors families, including 325 children.

39 of those cases were placed with volunteer attorneys from our partner firms and numerous others received extensive advice and assistance from AVLF staff.
Safe and Stable Homes

Standing with Our Neighbors (SWON)

While work is on-going in many cases, 61 SWON cases were closed in 2017. Of these, 36 households received repairs to their units or were transferred to safer, healthier units, and 8 evictions were avoided or favorably settled.

In addition to legal representation in 2017, the SWON program:

- Distributed 8 high-quality dehumidifiers and numerous other items to improve household health. These included anti-allergen mattress covers, rat and roach traps, fans, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Paid past due utilities for 11 families (totaling $1,930) to prevent utility disconnections, which often result in eviction.
- Contracted professional mold testing services on 33 occasions, nearly all of which uncovered dangerous conditions.
- Made 11 referrals for SWON residents to the Furniture Bank and covered the $100 fee in all cases.

SWON Partner Firms

- ALSTON & BIRD
- Arnall Golden Gregory LLP
- JONES DAY
- KILPATRICK TOWNSEND
- KING & SPALDING
- NELSON MULLINS
- EVERSHEDES SUTHERLAND
- troutman sanders
- taylor english
Safe and Stable Homes

Eviction Defense

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.

- 50 tenants received valuable advice and counsel
- 26 tenants received full representation to defend eviction within 10 days
- $26,875 Amount awarded to/debt avoided for tenants facing eviction

Dollars for Judgments

The Dollars for Judgments program puts places creditors’ rights attorneys to work on behalf of low-income clients who have obtained a judgment as a result of a case won by an AVLF staff or volunteer attorney.

- 14 clients assigned expert attorneys to collect on their judgments
- $12,249 Amount collected in 2017

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 and/or assistance in filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy petitions.

- 171 appointments scheduled for free expert consultation at court-based clinic
- 15 expert volunteer attorneys gave an afternoon to staff the clinic
- $21,000 Value of attorney hours donated during PIC clinics

Probate Information Center

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.

- 86 clients were referred for free representation in Chapter 7 proceedings in 2017
- 19 Value of attorney hours donated during PIC clinics
Safe and Stable Families

The Safe and Stable Families Project provides advocacy, resources, and legal assistance to Atlantans with family law needs - at no cost. The programs under Safe and Stable Families address intimate partner violence, custody cases, divorce, and more - because a safe and stable family provides a solid foundation on which Atlanta families can thrive.

At Long Last—Safety. Client Story

27 years. Nearly three decades of marriage.

Leila and her husband came to the States many years ago to start a family. Together, they raised three children—and, with the encouragement of her husband, Leila stayed home to raise them.

But throughout their marriage, Leila’s husband drank heavily and often verbally abused her in front of the children. The abuse escalated over the years. Eventually it became physical, and when Leila confronted her husband about his multiple affairs, he threatened to beat her so severely that she would not escape alive.

Leila feared for her life. Her husband insisted that if she called the police, no one would believe her—and she would die. Her husband controlled all of the finances, kept her isolated from her friends and family, and relentlessly humiliated her in front of the children. She knew he was capable of anything.

With nowhere to turn for help, Leila sought the guidance of the Safe Families Office. She petitioned the court for a protective order against her husband, and with a lawyer by her side, Leila won.

Her husband was forced to leave and to remain at least 200 yards away from her at all times. She was granted temporary custody of her youngest child—the only minor—and the court ordered her husband to pay nearly $30,000 in child support for the year. Leila and her youngest child were connected with counseling services to help them heal. When an abuser threatens your life, healing can seem impossible. Safety and stability seem so far away.

But from the moment a survivor steps into our Safe Families Office, they are protected by our staff, by our attorneys. Their courage to reach out often saves their lives, and AVLF’s staff and volunteers do everything in our power to protect them.

The Safe Families Office is located in the Fulton County Courthouse, and is Georgia’s very rst lawyer-staffed, courthouse-based resource for victims of intimate partner abuse.

When a survivor of intimate partner violence walks into the courthouse for help, our team—in collaboration with Partnership Against Domestic Violence (PADV)—provides comprehensive consultation services that address every foreseeable aspect of a survivor’s safety and well-being.

Our society encourages victims of intimate partner, elder, and child abuse to address the violence through the courts. But these families can face insurmountable challenges when trying to navigate the legal process: they may have insufficient knowledge of the justice system, inadequate education to take advantage of the court’s power, financial constraints, emotional and psychological barriers, and the ever-worsening fear of retaliation from their abuser, should the abuser become aware of legal action.

Each appointment includes legal consultation, safety planning, access to shelters, and thorough guidance that respects the survivor’s opinions and goals.

Lawyers, paralegals, and law students trained by AVLF in the law and psychology of domestic violence offer legal consultation, advice, direction, and direct representation in their effort to secure long-term protective orders—the highest protection offered in civil court for the victim and her family.

AVLF’s social workers at the SFO provide holistic support to survivors—such as resume building, rent and utility assistance, low-cost counseling, child care, and more—so that survivors can break free from abuse and regain their independence.

Having access to legal counsel, safety planning, and holistic services offers real hope for rebuilding healthy, positive lives.

“I have never been so grateful for someone who would take a complete stranger’s personal life so seriously and fight for them with the magnitude that my attorney did for me and my daughter.” – Safe Families Office client

3,294 visitors to the Safe Families Office (including people who visited multiple times)

1,658 survivors received assistance in filing a petition, safety planning, and accompaniment to ex parte hearing

2,506 children directly impacted by the Safe Families Office
Safe and Stable Families

In collaboration with TechBridge, the Safe Families Office began integrating 5 tablets and 4 desktop computers into our intake process. With a full roll-out in early 2018, these devices make paperwork easier, faster and more intuitive for staff and clients—meaning more one-on-one time to make the best decisions for each individual client.

“I will never forget what you have done for me. I will remember you for life”
– Safe Families Office client

307 cases placed with attorneys for representation
142 protective orders extended
80 volunteer attorneys trained

2,101 volunteer attorney hours
$525,250 Value of donated attorney hours
Safe and Stable Families

Family Law Program

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 and need help with divorce and custody matters. Many have claims for unpaid child support and need legal assistance. Many are men who have not legitimated their children, meaning that if he desires a Protective Order against the abusive mother, the children may remain in her care.

To assist in family law matters beyond the protective order, AVLF has a full-time family law staff attorney, who coordinates the provision of pro bono family law services, and a social worker, who provides social service support to clients.

“Thank you so much for helping me. My divorce is now final and my life is going in the direction I want. I had very good people handling my case from the beginning until the end, and I’m truly grateful from the bottom of my heart.” – Family Law Program client

---

Number of client applications to Family Law Program: 102

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>49 clients</th>
<th>16 cases</th>
<th>5 clients</th>
<th>49 clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assisted by the Family Law Program</td>
<td>placed with an attorney</td>
<td>given limited legal assistance</td>
<td>given comprehensive advice and counsel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Breakdown:

- 13 divorces
- 1 legitimation defense
- 1 grandparent visitation case
- 1 child support case
Safe and Stable Families

Guardian ad Litem Program

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—someone appointed by the court to represent and protect the interests of a minor.

AVLF recruits private lawyers to serve as Guardians at no cost to the parties. We train lawyers from various backgrounds to identify the best interests of the children. After a full-day CLE training, attorneys are added to the list of eligible volunteers.

AVLF’s Safe and Stable Families Project Director mentors and supervises those lawyers as they make thorough investigations and recommendations to the Court about the best course of action.

The partnership between the Court and AVLF promotes a prompt, effective, and efficient outcome for the Court and for the parents, and, most importantly, provides much-needed advocacy to children torn between two homes.

Our Community

Outreach Spotlights & Fundraisers

Community involvement is crucial to the success of our programs. We cherish each opportunity to participate in the conversation, to enhance our community, and to learn. AVLF hosted and participated in an assortment of community outreach events, including movie nights, staff appreciation days, award ceremonies, Lawyer in the Library events, fall festivals, and more.

- 38 new cases opened in 2017
- 68 children served by a Guardian ad Litem
- 40 volunteer attorneys received training
- 810 pro bono hours donated to the program
- $202,500 value of attorney hours donated
On October 5th, the Safe and Stable Families team participated in Tapestry’s domestic violence forum, The Refugee & Immigrant Journey: Past, Present & Future. AVLF was honored to have Staff Attorney Nilufar Abdi-Tabari invited to speak at the forum about the implications of divorce and custody cases for immigrant survivors of domestic violence.

AVLF was also named one of Tapestry’s Community Partners of the Year. The award recognizes “the outstanding commitment to Tapestry and the many families [they] serve.”

As our projects in the Safe and Stable Homes Project continue to grow exponentially, we become increasingly connected to and invested in the communities we serve. Safe and Stable Homes has hosted and participated in numerous outreach events throughout 2017, including the monthly Thomasville Heights Turn Up and Turn Out event, the Lawyer in the Library series, know-your-rights presentations, and more.

In October 2017, the Safe and Stable Homes team joined students, families, and staff at Gideons Elementary School for their Fall Harvest Festival, where students played games, ate food, and enjoyed the cooling weather. AVLF sponsored food, candy, and games, and had a table set up at the event for families to stop by. This fall festival was one of 11 that AVLF either organized or participated in.
Our Community: Outreach Spotlights

AVLF at the Movies: Class Divide

On Tuesday, September 19 at the Landmark Midtown Art Cinema, AVLF hosted a screening of the HBO Documentary film Class Divide. The screening was followed by a discussion about the intersecting issues of affordable housing, gentrification, and education in Atlanta. Speakers included affordable housing advocate and BeltLine founder Ryan Gravel and Atlanta Public Schools’ Superintendent Dr. Meria Carstarphen. We are grateful to event sponsors Taylor English and Daily Report, without whom the evening would not have been possible, and to our speakers, who invited a critical look at the issues facing Atlanta today.

Our Community: Fundraisers

5th Annual PurSHOEing Justice

One in three 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.

Event Chair Ashley Heintz led an amazing team of women who made this fourth annual event a resounding success. King & Spalding was lively as 300 friends of AVLF sipped and shopped the night away, raising over $70,000 for the Safe Families Office. Inspiring Guest of Honor Tameka Webb stole the show with her moving survivor story.

We offer a special thank you to presenting sponsor Esquire Deposition Solutions.
Our Community: Fundraisers

4th Annual Beer Tasting and BBQ Battle

The Beer Tasting & 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.

In 2017, more than 800 friends of AVLF and ALAS attended the event at Park Tavern, 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: Grand Champion BBQ, Saltyard, Sweet Auburn Barbeque, Two Urban Licks, and Righteous Cues. Grand Champion BBQ won the Judge’s Award while Sweet Auburn Barbeque took home the People’s Choice Award.

We couldn’t have done it without event co-chairs Sarah Zampell and Ansley Sluss—or without the support of United Distributors and the Atlanta BBQ Club.

6th Annual Warner Bates Guardian ad Litem Benefit

Each August, one of the metropolitan area’s largest family law firms hosts a party at its law office to raise funds for AVLF’s Guardian ad Litem Program. On August 24th, the beautiful penthouse offices of Warner Bates were the perfect backdrop for delicious hors d’oeuvres and cocktails provided by Taco Cowboy. We are grateful to all of the event’s sponsors, in particular platinum sponsor IAG Forensics and Daily Report, as well as gold sponsors State Bank & Trust and Signature FD.

The event is the primary pillar of support sustaining a program that has proven invaluable to the Fulton County Superior Courts Family Division. As in years past, judges, attorneys and other family law professionals gave generously (and celebrated convivially) at the event, which raised more than $25,000 for the Guardian ad Litem program.
26th Annual Winetasting

On November 2nd, the Atlanta legal community kicked off the 2017 holiday season with the 26th Annual AVLF Winetasting at the beautiful Biltmore Ballrooms. More than 1,000 lawyers and other friends of AVLF celebrated Atlanta’s 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 $600,000. We are extremely 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 AVLF in connection with the event.
We are humbled and honored by the support of the following partners, who gave gifts this year of $10,000 or greater.

- Allison Hill / H. Foundation in honor of Liz Whipple
- Alston & Bird LLP
- Arnall Golden Gregory LLP
- John Chandler & Beth Tanis
- The Coca-Cola Company Legal Division
- Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP
- Dentons US LLP
- DTI / Epiq
- Eversheds Sutherland
- Elizabeth Finn Johnson & Stuart Johnson
- Kilpatrick Townsend
- King & Spalding LLP
- KrollDiscovery
- Paul J. Murphy & Gia M. Partain
- Richard K. Paradies Philanthropic Fund in honor of Liz Whipple
- Smith, Gambrell & Russell LLP
- SunTrust Bank Legal Specialty Group
- Taylor English Duma LLP
- Troutman Sanders LLP
- Warner Bates

Our Supporters: Donors

We could not achieve our goals without the support of the following organizations, who provided AVLF with grants of $10,000 and greater in 2017:

- May P. & Francis L. Abreu Charitable Trust
- Annie E. Casey Civic Site
- Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
- Atlanta Bar Foundation
- Mary Allen Lindsey Branan Foundation
- Thalia and Michael Carlos Foundation
- Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta
- Equal Justice Works Georgia Housing Corps
- Fulton DeKalb Hospital Authority
- Georgia Bar Foundation
- Georgia Power Foundation
- Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation
- The Imlay Foundation
- Jesse Parker Williams Foundation
- Jones Day Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kendeda Fund
- Purpose Built Schools
- W.G. Raoul Foundation
- Rich Foundation
- Sartain Lanier Family Foundation
- United Way of Greater Atlanta Spark Prize
- Victim Legal Assistance Network
- Victims of Crimes Act Assistance
- David, Helen and Marian Woodward Foundation

Our Supporters: Grants
Our Supporters:

Celebrating Service Award Winners

On October 20th, AVLF honored our 2017 award winners at the Atlanta Bar Association’s Celebrating Service Luncheon.

Elizabeth Finn Johnson has been volunteering with AVLF’s domestic violence program for the past 10 years. Elizabeth is a fierce advocate for women, especially survivors of domestic violence. Upon retiring from The Coca-Cola Company in 2015, where she worked as an employment litigator, Elizabeth took her passion for working with survivors to the next level.

Now, in addition to representing survivors in protective order hearings, she now devotes at least two full days each week volunteering as a legal intake advocate in the Safe Families Office in the Fulton County Courthouse.

Elizabeth’s energy, enthusiasm for this work, and brilliant legal mind inspire us and ensure that Safe Families Office clients receive a volunteer lawyer and advocate who is truly devoted to hearing their stories and zealously advocating for their safety and stability.

JoAnna Smith has been volunteering with AVLF’s Guardian ad Litem program for the past two years. She has a passion for helping others. As the managing partner of Anderson Rupani & Smith, LLC—a family law firm featuring sliding scale and unbundled family law services—JoAnna has realized her noble goal of making family law legal services more accessible to low and middle-income Georgians.

While JoAnna and her firm partners have volunteered for all of AVLF’s Safe & Stable Families Project’s programs, she has dedicated a significant amount of her time to the GAL program. She has exhibited a genuine desire to do what is best for each child involved in her GAL cases and thoughtful consideration of the various options in play. Even in the toughest contested custody cases, the children can rest assured they have a friendly, intelligent, and devoted advocate for their best interests.

ivory t. brown was one of the first attorneys to sign on as a program partner. She was committing to represent at least one survivor of domestic violence in his/her family law legal matter on a pro bono basis in the next year.

When AVLF came knocking, ivory did not hesitate to accept her first case. She provided the highest quality representation for her client in a legitimation defense action, with the final order favoring her client. Shortly thereafter, ivory jumped right back in and accepted a divorce action for another survivor.

ivory’s willingness to partner with and serve AVLF’s Family Law Program in its infancy and generosity in giving her time to our clients has helped set the standard for this program and allowed it to thrive as we proceed in our second year.

Safe Families Office Volunteer of the Year: Elizabeth Finn Johnson

Guardian ad Litem: JoAnna Smith

Family Law Program Volunteer of the Year: ivory t. brown

Celebrating Service Award Winners
**Our Supporters:**
Celebrating Service Award Winners

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

Eversheds Sutherland is our Safe & Stable Homes Firm of the Year for being a steadfast partner of AVLF’s diverse initiatives to help struggling tenants. Eversheds Sutherland is a pillar of AVLF’s Saturday Lawyer Program, sponsoring four Saturdays in 2017 alone and consistently accepting cases on behalf of our most vulnerable clients.

Without diluting its commitment to Saturday Lawyer Day, Eversheds Sutherland is also a key partner of the Standing with Our Neighbors program, hosting trainings, conducting research, and achieving stellar results for Thomasville Heights residents.

While the firm boasts too many standout attorneys to name, Melissa Conrad-Alam exemplified the high caliber of Eversheds Sutherland’s representation when she got her client, a grandmother, out of her rat- and wasp-infested apartment and got her security deposit refunded in full. Led and supported by attorney John Fleming and Pro Bono Manager Aileen Bleach, the pro bono work of Eversheds Sutherland consistently improves the lives of tenants across Fulton County and sets an example for other firms.

---

**Safe and Stable Homes Firm of the Year:** Emerson W. Girardeau III, Eversheds Sutherland

Emerson W. Girardeau III has earned the distinction of the Safe & Stable Homes Volunteer of the Year for his strong commitment to Atlanta’s low-income tenants, through both our Standing with Our Neighbors program and our county-wide tenant programs.

In every case, Emerson advocates for his clients in a gentle—but-persistent way that overcomes stubborn landlords and opposing counsel like the steady drip of water on rock.

One of his clients was living in a rat-infested apartment with her newborn baby when she called AVLF. Thanks to Emerson’s persistence, the landlord relocated the family to a clean and safe unit. For another client, he found a local charity that paid her large outstanding electric bill—a barrier that had prevented her from leaving her moldy apartment.

Emerson is consistently patient, unruffled, and kind to his clients, who are often experiencing deep trauma. For always going the extra mile and for achieving great results with both skill and heart, Emerson is the Safe & Stable Homes Volunteer of the Year.
Our People: Board of Directors

James J. McGinnis
Warner, Bates, McGough, McGinnis & Portnoy, President

Walter Davis
Jones Day, Vice President

Nancy Baughan
Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs LLP, Treasurer

Adria Perez
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, Secretary

Paul J. Murphy
King & Spalding LLP, Executive Committee

Chelton Tanger
The Tanger Consulting Group LLC, Executive Committee

Margaret Vath
Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta Bar President

Cathy Vandenberg
Atlanta Legal Aid Society

Hon. Robert McBurney
Fulton County Superior Court Judge

Hon. Eric Richardson
Fulton County State Court Judge

James Rusert
DLA Piper LLP, AVLF Junior Board President

Shawntel Hebert
Taylor English, Gate City Bar Association President

Joseph Hoffman
Kitchens Kelley Gaynes, Atlanta Council of Younger Lawyers Chair

Steve Allen
SunTrust Bank, Immediate Past President

Tom Best
Home Depot

Lawrence Bracken II
Hunton & Williams LLP

Tom Curvin
Eversheds Sutherland

Jeff Harper
DTI / Epiq

Jennifer Jackson
Entrusted Advisors, LLC

Elizabeth Finn Johnson
The Coca-Cola Company (Retired)

Trudy Kremer
Jackson Spalding

Meredith Lackey
Georgia Power

Jeong-Hwa (June) Lee
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

Christin Camp Lumpkin
Global Payments Inc.

Jennifer Malinovsky
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

Jeff Nix
Taylor English Duma LLP

Ron J. Schwartz
Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP

Will Shearer
United Distributors Inc.

Brian Smith
Arnall Golden Gregory LLP

Avital Stadler
Esquire Deposition Solutions, LLC

David Stainback
PwC

Jaime Theriot
Troutman Sanders

Stacey Turner
Georgia Power

Meka Ward
Thomas, Kennedy, Sampson & Tompkins

Denelle Waynick
UCB, Inc.

Thornell Williams
Ogletree Deakins
Our People: Junior Board of Directors

James Rusert  
DLA Piper LLP, President

Rachel Fox Weitz  
Delta Airlines, Incoming President

Amelia Medina  
U.S. Department of Justice, Immediate Past President

Tyler Wright  
IAG Forensics & Valuation, Secretary

Shelly Anderson  
Hunton & Williams LLP

Katie Balthrop  
Troutman Sanders LLP

Alex Barkto  
Polsinelli

Paul Barsness  
Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs LLP

Audrey Bergeson  
Smith & Lake

Brittany Cambre  
Eversheds Sutherland

Michelle Davis  
PwC

Jennifer Deal  
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP

Kenneth B. Franklin  
Duane Morris LLP

Ashley Heintz  
Jones Day

Sherida Mabon  
City of Atlanta

Kristen Rajagopal  
Bequest

Sarah Rasalam  
Arnall Golden Gregory LLP

Andrew Rosenzweig  
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

Jason Rottner  
Alston & Bird LLP

Bethany Rupert  
King & Spalding

Sean Sullivan  
Alston & Bird LLP

Andi Warner  
TrustPoint Court Reporting

“I love to work with AVLF because I know how much courage it takes for AVLF’s clients to stand up for themselves—to their landlords, to their abusers—and what a difference the right lawyer can make in their lives.”  
–Jimmy Rusert, Junior Board President

Our People: Safe & Stable Homes Project Staff

Cole Thaler  
Director, Safe & Stable Homes Project

Erica Taylor  
Staff Attorney, Saturday Lawyer Program

Ayanna Jones-Lightsy  
Staff Attorney, Standing with Our Neighbors

Lauren Washington  
Staff Attorney, Standing with Our Neighbors

Erik Provitt  
Staff Attorney, Standing with Our Neighbors

Chrystal Reynolds  
Community Advocate, Standing with Our Neighbors

Nekesha Whitaker  
Community Advocate, Standing with Our Neighbors

Katrina Monroe-Pettway  
Community Advocate, Standing with Our Neighbors

Shameka Dixon  
Community Advocate, Standing with Our Neighbors

Matilde Davis  
Program Coordinator, Saturday Lawyer Program

Kenisha Carson  
Paralegal, Safe & Stable Homes Project

Christian Rozzell  
Paralegal, Safe & Stable Homes Project

Sharlena Foster  
Administrative Assistant, Safe & Stable Homes Project

LaKeta Whittaker  
Community Advocate, Standing with Our Neighbors
Our People: Safe & Stable Families Project Staff

Jamie Perez
Director, Safe & Stable Families Project

Joel Correa
Staff Attorney, Safe & Stable Families Project

Nilufar Abdi-Tabari
Staff Attorney, Family Law Program

Cynthia Padilla
Legal Navigator, Safe & Stable Families Project

Lilli Crowe
Program Coordinator, Safe & Stable Families Project

Camille Millar
Social Worker, Safe & Stable Families Project

Our People: Fundraising & Administration Staff

Martin L. Ellin
Executive Director

Michael Lucas
Deputy Director

Libby King
Development Director

Carey Kersten
Marketing Director

Katie King
Digital Communications Manager

Jon Reading
Office Manager

Diana Guyton
Development Coordinator

Ashleigh Starnes
Development Assistant
In order to serve our clients, we need volunteers. These generous volunteers, who take on cases from domestic violence to unpaid wages to landlord/tenant issues, are often taking cases that are outside their area of expertise. AVLF staff must recruit, train, and mentor volunteer attorneys in order to serve our clients—and this has a cost.

More than 75% of AVLF’s budget pays for personnel salaries and benefits. Our remarkable staff members also speak with, counsel, advocate for, and otherwise support thousands of Atlantans who call but cannot qualify for services from AVLF’s pro bono attorneys.

80% of AVLF staff directly interact with volunteer attorneys and clients. Our development and communications staff are here to ensure that we raise enough money to save lives, expand our services, keep the lights on—and ethically and accurately keep track of it all.

The remaining budget pays for rent for the AVLF office, general office-related expenses, 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 2017, revenue to AVLF came from three sources:

- **44%** Generous individual lawyers, law firms, corporate legal departments, and Bar sections donated almost all the remainder of the 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. This makes up 70% of the total contributions we received from the legal community.

- **49%** Philanthropic grants from a variety of sources.

- **7%** Legislatively mandated add-on to filing fees in the State and Magistrate courts of Fulton County.
Remembering Liz Whipple

Elizabeth Ann Whipple, known to her family as Liz Ann and to AVLF as simply Liz, was the director of our Domestic Violence Project from 2011 to 2015.

Liz left AVLF to accept a two-year teaching fellowship as the Interim Director of the Domestic Violence Law Clinic at the University of Alabama School of Law - the same clinic she attended as a law student. Liz was planning to return to Atlanta early summer 2017, having accepted a position at the family law firm Warner Bates.

Many of you knew Liz to be wonderfully irreverent, and creatively playful in a way few are. But occasionally lost in the pleasure of thinking about her quirky, life-affirming insistence on making every day an adventure was the fact that she was an outstanding and fierce advocate for abused women. She was simply unwilling to allow domestic violence victims to stand alone, and with her help, our clients could know freedom from the fear of further abuse, and real dignity in their lives.

Liz was an excellent model for how to offer legal services to women facing stalking and abuse. She knew the law, she advocated with passion, she gained the full trust of her clients, and she made people who had never experienced the legal system believe that justice was possible. She created strong bonds with the clerks and judges and sheriffs in the Fulton County Courthouse and the police throughout the city. Liz was a leader of the community of those who work to curb violence.

She was also an exceptional teacher of her craft. There has been a stunning outpouring of love for Liz, much of it in the form of e-mails and texts and cards we received at AVLF from all over the country, and by far the largest single theme was “Liz taught me.” Judge Jane Barwick told us that Liz taught her everything she knows about the law and psychology of domestic violence: in fact, she says that Liz taught her how to be a Judge.

Dozens of lawyers have told me that Liz pushed them out of the nest, or that Liz was by their side when they tried their first case, or that the work that they did with and for Liz informed their decisions about where and how they wanted to practice law.

Liz made professionalism contagious by inspiring others to provide pro bono service. So many people have told us that they, or lawyers that they worked with, first started taking on pro bono matters because of Liz. They attended one of her training sessions that, despite covering a very serious topic, was somehow fun and entertaining. Liz not only dedicated her whole career to providing legal services to those who would have otherwise gone without representation, she also drew in scores of lawyers from the private bar to work with her. Using a term we have heard often about Liz’s power of pro bono persuasion, Cheryl Naja described Liz’s ability to bring in volunteers as “miraculous.”

Jamie Perez—who succeeded Liz as the Director of our domestic violence program—and her Safe Families Office colleagues carry on the fundamental traditions and core values that Liz lived: civility, professionalism, integrity and personal dignity, which are indispensable to building respect for the rule of law. Liz believed, and we will always believe, that there is no real justice unless everyone has access to it.

We were lucky to work with Liz: the entire legal community was as fortunate to have her lead our fight against domestic abuse.
Remembering Liz Whipple

The following donors made a generous contribution to AVLF in honor of our dear friend:

Adam Reinke · Alan Hergert · Allison Murphy · Allison Hill / H. Foundation · Amanda M. Conley
Andrea Landers · April Groeschell · Becky Keenum · Bert Eidson · Beth Stephens · Brian & Nancy Quinn
Brian H. Sumrall · Brianne Erwin · Carly Freliche · Carolyn Boze · Cathie Wood · Cathy Gillespie
Cattle National Bank & Trust Company · Chris Conley · Chris/Beth Thomas · Courtenay Miller
David Cheng · David Downer · David Galt · David Schleifer · Deirdre Sweeney · Denise Nielson
Diane Ross · Donna Scroggins · Douglas Eastman · Douglas Gerber · Elizabeth Bradley · Elizabeth Wade
Emily Curl · Emily Walthall · Emily Ward · Evelyn Ward · Farley Ezekiel · Frank Taylor · Gary Alemnik
Georgia Lord · Hon. Susan Edlein · Hon. Wendy Shook & Walter Jospin · Jan, Bill, and Paul Chalker
Janet Dias · Jared Ellis · Jeffrey Hintz · Jeffrey McIntyre · Jenessa Olson · Jenna Rubin
Jennifer Alewine · Jennis Warren · Jonathan Slasinski

Jordan C. Raymond · Judith M. Alemnik · Julia Williams · Karyn & William Alexander · Katherine Rogers
Kathryn Divjak · Kathy Smith · Katie Hummel · Kendall Kerew · Kenneth Franklin · Kent Pryor
Kevin, Kathy, KC, & John Conley · Kim Bart Mullikin · Kim Bond · Kim Hansen · Kimberly Clarke
King & Spalding Personnel · L. Thomas Clements · Lane Faughnan · Laurie & Seth Starr · Laurie Forstner & Alan Stewart · Lee & Amy Foster · Leigh Byers · Leslie Watson Bright · Lindsay O’Reilly · Lisa Bliss
Lisa Liang · Lori Anderson · Louie De Arias · Margaret Holman · Matthew Burton
Matthew Don Roberts · Matthew Self · Maureen St. Laurent Evritt · Megan Michelsen
Melissa Zmistowski · Michael Gilman · Miranda Goot · Misty Goddard · Natosha Safo · Nicole Hughes
Nigel Lewis · Nora Siggins · Norma Gallow · Pamela Pierson · Patty Horton · Penny & Thomas Clements
Philip Price · Rachel Fox Weitz · Raye Mullins · Rebecca Norman · Rebecca Rieder
Richard K. Paradies Philanthropic Fund · Richard Michaels · Ron Dickerson · Ryan Buck
Samuel S. Choy · Sandra Brooks · Stephanie Peltier · Steven N. Cayton · Steven Schulman
Susan Conner Gantt · Susan Divjak · Susan Setterstrom · Tammy Smith · Terri Hendley · Toni Ojeda Orr
Tricia Perkins William Stout · Zheyao Li
Now that you have read about our programs—about the remarkable growth of the SWON program, the new horizons of the Safe Families Office, and so much more—we invite you to step into our movement.

1. **Stay Connected**

To keep in touch, sign up for our newsletter and like us on social media. You’ll be the first to hear about events, programs, and how you can get involved.

- Twitter: @supportAVLF
- Facebook: @supportAVLF
- Instagram: @supportAVLF
- LinkedIn: Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

Sign up for our monthly newsletter at: avlf.org/subscription.

2. **Volunteer With Us**

Each year, through AVLF alone, lawyers give thousands of Atlantans entry to an otherwise inaccessible legal system. Attorneys stand up for survivors of domestic violence. They protect tenants from landlords who refuse to honor their contracts and housing codes. They fight for denied wages. **Attorneys fight for justice—and they change Atlanta for the better.**

Atlanta is not just a series of streets we navigate to get to our work or our homes. This is our community. We have a responsibility to help this community flourish—and we can only do so with willing, enthusiastic volunteers. We invite you to stand with us.

Volunteer now at: avlf.org/volunteer-opportunities.

3. **Attend Our Events**

As an organization, we host fundraising events that allow attorneys and friends in our community to **socialize, network, and raise money for our programs**. Our events are very fun—ask our volunteers!

You can support us by sponsoring our events or purchasing tickets.

Learn more about our events at: avlf.org/events.

4. **Become A Supporter**

While we rely on the generosity of volunteer lawyers to represent our clients, the work of connecting clients and attorneys is in constant acceleration, and as a nonprofit, we rely on your financial support to keep it going.

Your gift creates opportunities for us to reach more clients, fight harder for equal justice, and bring more comprehensive, holistic services to Atlantans in need.

You can make a monthly recurring gift of any size at: avlf.org/product/recurring-monthly-donation.

Visit avlf.org and click **Donate**, or send a check to: Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, 235 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 1750, Atlanta, GA 30303

Learn more about our 2018 Annual Campaign at safeandstable.org.