



2024

July 2023 - June 2024

Annual REPORT



LEGALCORPS

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🌐 www.legalcorps.org

MESSAGE FROM THE E.D.

In 2004, Minnesota leaders came together to create LegalCORPS, recognizing that small businesses and entrepreneurs too often lacked access to affordable legal guidance essential for starting, growing, and sustaining their ventures. More than twenty years later, we remain steadfast in our mission to expand access to justice—now serving not only entrepreneurs and small business owners but also inventors and low-revenue nonprofits seeking vital business and intellectual property legal support.

This past fiscal year marked both a milestone and a moment of reflection as **LegalCORPS celebrated its 20th anniversary**. We also faced a rapidly evolving legal landscape, with shifting federal and state laws that have deeply affected the communities we serve. From changing tariffs impacting the supply chains our clients depend on, to new employment regulations requiring greater employer compliance, to challenges facing nonprofits engaged in diversity and equity work—LegalCORPS continues to stand firm in its commitment to ensuring equitable access to legal expertise.

Since 2021, our organization has grown from a team of four to **eight dedicated staff members and several interns**, allowing us to expand our reach from serving fewer than 1,000 individuals annually to nearly **2,000 clients** this year. Through more than **4,400 hours of pro bono legal advice and limited representation**, our volunteers and staff have continued to meet clients where they are—adapting swiftly to new challenges and opportunities alike.

It is a true privilege to serve and lead this organization. I am profoundly grateful for our exceptional team—our staff, board members, volunteer attorneys, and paralegals—whose skill, compassion, and commitment bring our mission to life every day.

Thank you for standing alongside us and those we serve. Your partnership makes our work possible.

Nicole Deters, MPA, PACC
Executive Director



LEGALCORPS

NOTABLE OUTCOMES



**Assisted
over 3,500
individuals
needing legal
services**

LegalCORPS staff and volunteers provided 4,930 hours of service to over 3,500 clients.

**Nearly 2,000
clients served
through our
programs**

LegalCORPS served nearly 2,000 clients through our programs.

**Over
\$2.8 million
invested
through 4,930
pro bono
hours**

LegalCORPS invested over \$2.8 million in value to small businesses, entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and inventors.

**54% of clients
served were
female founders**

**62% of clients
identified as
Black, Indigenous,
and people of
color**

**80% of clients
served fell below
200% of federal
poverty levels**



LEGALCORPS

2024 FINANCIALS

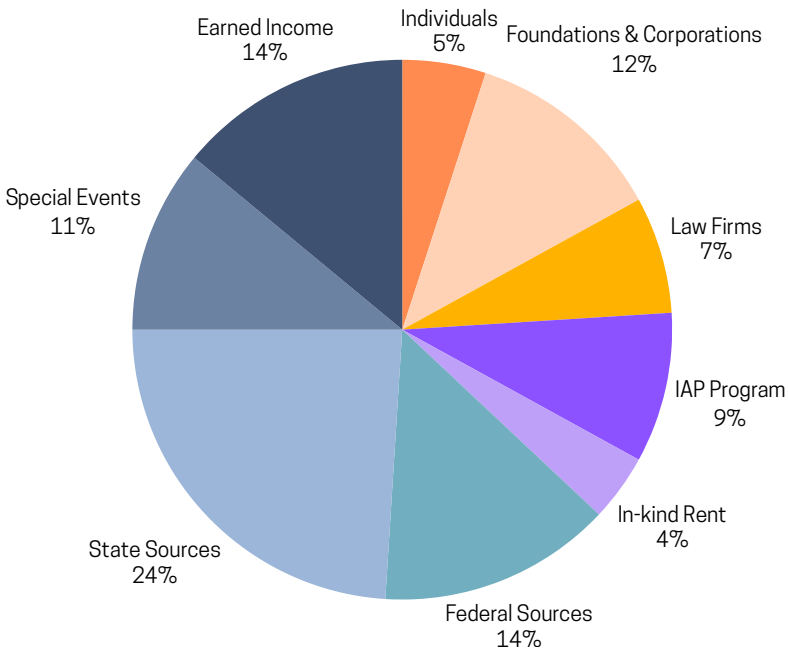
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FY 2024

	FY 2023	FY 2024		FY 2023	FY 2024
Bank Accounts	\$182,388	\$101,708	Total Current Liabilities	\$10,883	\$8,431
Accounts Receivable	\$69,502	\$62,301	Loans Payable	\$71,377	\$67,297
Other Assets	\$4,655	\$2,759	Total Equity	\$174,285	\$91,040
Total Assets	\$256,545	\$166,768	Total Liabilities & Equity	\$256,545	\$166,768

FUNDING DIVERSIFICATION



LEGALCORPS VALUES



Mission Statement

LegalCORPS expands access to business law services for individuals and organizations to promote economic development and strengthen communities. As Minnesota's only business law legal aid organization, LegalCORPS programs empower individuals and families to build noble legacies for generations to come.

Core Values

Our core values exemplify our steadfast and daily commitment to our organizational mission, our clients, and our volunteers.



Client-focused

Empathetic and impactful attention to client needs



Collaborative

Working closely with clients, attorneys, and partner organizations



Culturally Responsive

Promoting and providing inclusive access to economic justice



Enterprising

Innovative programs that strengthen communities



Versatile

Adapting service delivery to meet community demands



Volunteer-centered

Valuing and supporting pro bono dedication and generosity



LEGALCORPS PROGRAMS

ENTREPRENEURS IN OUR COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The Entrepreneurs in Our Communities program is a LegalCORPS initiative to make non-litigation business law services more accessible to under-resourced communities throughout Minnesota.

Partnerships

We partner with locally focused organizations that have built trusting relationships with their service areas who then refer clients to LegalCORPS when appropriate. In addition to free legal advice, we offer many educational opportunities to help businesses succeed.



Legal Advice

Sound guidance on business law matters is essential to the success of all entrepreneurs, regardless of income. LegalCORPS has an integral role to play in ensuring that entrepreneurs and the small nonprofits who serve our communities, have access to legal assistance even if they cannot afford fee-paying relationships with an attorney.



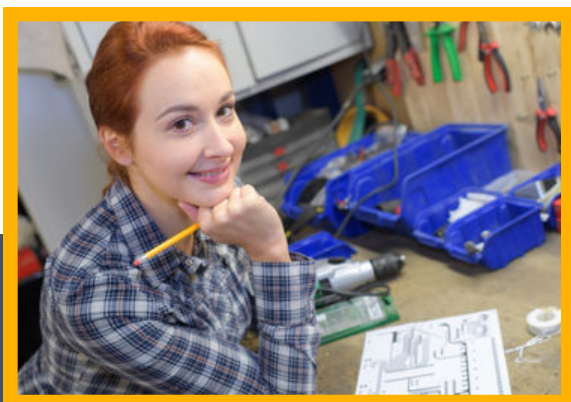
LEGALCORPS PROGRAMS

INVENTOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The LegalCORPS Inventor Assistance Program allows inventors with great ideas to overcome one of the financial roadblocks to bringing innovations to market.

Leadership

LegalCORPS started the Inventor Assistance Program, the first and longest-running patent pro bono program in the United States. Based on our model, the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO) created a nationwide patent pro bono program.



Legal Advice

We provide free legal representation to qualifying low-income inventors in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota who are seeking to patent their inventions. We help inventors through the process by providing an array of services for people who are just beginning to those who are further along in their journey to filing.



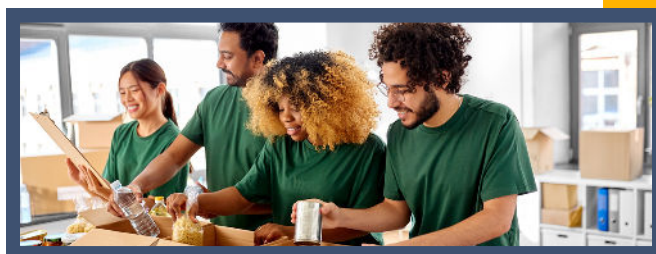
LEGALCORPS PROGRAMS

NONPROFIT SUPPORT

Without sound legal advice that can head off problems, a nonprofit's entire mission can be at risk. LegalCORPS assists small nonprofits by connecting them with volunteer attorneys who can provide pro bono legal advice and assistance specific to nonprofit entities.

Ways We Help

Limited Scope Representation
Startup Assistance
Brief Advice Clinics



Legal Advice

Nonprofits can encounter legal issues like those faced by for profit entities, including:

- Contracts, agreements, and leases
- Human resources and employment law
- Real estate
- Intellectual property

We also have attorneys who specialize in issues unique to the nonprofit sector, including:

- Drafting of Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
- Reporting requirements
- Filing for and maintenance of federal tax-exempt status
- Operating and governance issues, conflicts of interest
- Tax-related issues around unrelated business income tax (UBIT)



LEGALCORPS GET INVOLVED



Volunteer Opportunities

LegalCORPS coordinates business law pro bono opportunities in three primary forms:

- Brief Advice Clinic Assistance
- Limited Scope Representation Assistance
- Public Presentations

Join our network of volunteer attorneys!

LegalCORPS connects attorneys who practice business and intellectual property law with opportunities to provide pro bono assistance in the areas of law they are most familiar with. Per Rule 6.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct, “Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least 50 hours of pro bono publico legal services per year.” Expanding access to the legal system in business law via pro bono assistance is as much a justice matter as other areas of legal need.

In addition to providing pro bono assistance to business owners, entrepreneurs, inventors, and nonprofits, LegalCORPS offers regular no cost educational opportunities to the public on the necessity and value of sound legal guidance to the success of any venture. An inability to pay for legal assistance leaves ventures at legal risk, potentially furthering economic inequalities within our communities. Pro bono legal assistance is the kind of volunteer community service only attorneys can provide.

Positive Impact on Communities

Sound guidance on business law matters is essential to the success of any venture, both for-profit and nonprofit entities. This is preventative legal support, and while receiving front-end guidance won’t guarantee freedom from legal concerns down the line, we aim to reduce the likelihood. The success of the small businesses and nonprofit organizations that our clients start is essential to not only their personal financial stability but also to the economic vitality of all of Minnesota. LegalCORPS programs are designed to help make all of Minnesota’s communities great places to live, raise families, do business, and serve others.

Hear from a Volunteer Attorney

My work with LegalCORPS has been personally rewarding and has helped me to offer what I believe our profession calls us to do – to help others when, absent legal professionals providing pro bono assistance, legal help would likely not otherwise be possible.

LEGALCORPS

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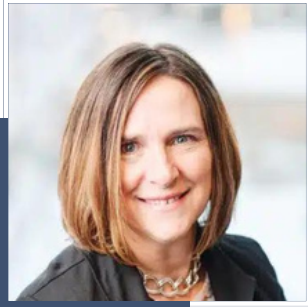
Neil M. Meyer
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Maslon LLP

Tom Triplett
Triplett Consulting, LLC



LEGALCORPS TEAM



Nicole Deters, MPA, PACC
Executive Director



Joshua D. Franklin, Esq.
Legal Services Director



Tiko Lieou
Pro Bono Programs Director



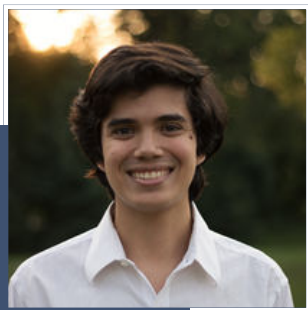
Jackie Craig
Strategic Engagement Director



Ben Hackett
Program Lead and
Development Specialist



Jeff Glazer
Wisconsin - IAP
Program Coordinator



Eduardo Escobar
Inventor Assistance and
Strategic Partnerships
Program Coordinator



Brenda Pfahnl
Attorney and
Equal Justice Works Fellow

A photograph of three people in a pottery studio. On the left, a Black woman with long dark hair is looking down. In the center, a man with a beard and brown hair is focused on shaping a piece of clay on a pottery wheel. On the right, a woman with glasses and a blue apron is holding a pottery tool. The background shows shelves with various pottery items.

Positive Community Impact

LegalCORPS programs are designed to help make all our communities great places to live, raise families, do business, and serve others.

MORE ABOUT LEGALCORPS

LegalCORPS offers non-litigation transactional business and intellectual property protection legal aid to entrepreneurs, business owners, inventors, and nonprofits with limited resources and/or access to the legal system.



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