

2025

July 2024 - June 2025

Annual REPORT



LEGALCORPS

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🌐 www.legalcorps.org



Roxanne Thorelli, 2025 Pro Bono Champion

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 **4,000 clients** this fiscal year.

Through over **5,300 hours of legal advice and limited representation**, our volunteer and staff attorneys 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



Photos from the LegalCORPS 2025 Volunteer & Client Appreciation Event

Top - John Sanger, *2025 Enterprising Client* with Nicole Deters, LegalCORPS Executive Director

Bottom - *2025 Pro Bono Catalysts*, Maslon LLP & 3M teams: Jessica Karp, Ann Gallagher, Martin Rosenbaum, Laura Trahms-Hagen, Dena Ehrich, Yen Florczak, and Courtney Harker.

LEGALCORPS

NOTABLE OUTCOMES



Assisted
almost 4,000
clients
needing
legal advice

LegalCORPS staff and volunteer attorneys provided **over 15,700 hours** of services to almost 4,000 clients.

Approximately
2,500 jobs
created or
maintained

LegalCORPS helped to create or maintain approximately **2,500 jobs** through our programs, including **over 110 startups!**

Almost
\$2.3 million
value invested
through
legal services

LegalCORPS invested almost **\$2.3 million in value** to businesses, entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and inventors.

57% of clients served were female founders

41% of clients identified as Black, Indigenous, and people of color

74% of clients reporting income fell below 200% of federal poverty levels



LEGALCORPS

2025 FINANCIALS

July 2024 - June 2025

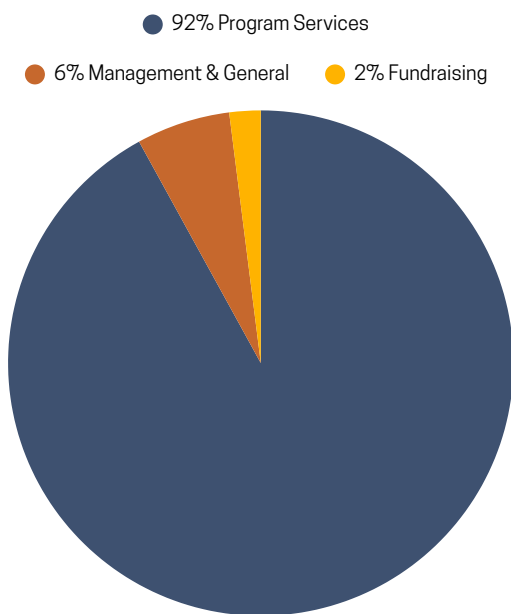


STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FY 2025

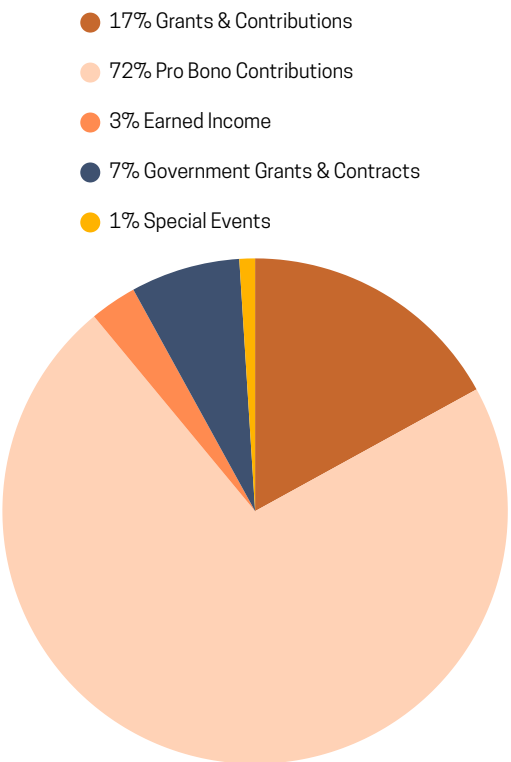
	FY 2024	FY 2025		FY 2024	FY 2025
Cash Assets	\$101,708	\$494,094	Current Liabilities	\$8,431	\$15,063
Account Receivable	\$62,301	\$30,696	Loans Payable	\$67,297	\$67,861
Other Assets	\$2,759	\$6,577	Total Equity	\$91,040	\$0
Total Assets	\$166,768	\$531,367	Total Liabilities	\$166,768	\$82,924

FUNDING DIVERSIFICATION

Expenses



Support and Revenue



LEGALCORPS VALUES



Featuring photos from the LegalCORPS 2025 Volunteer & Client Appreciation Event

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 dedicating 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. We partner with locally focused organizations that have built trusting relationships with their service areas who then refer clients to LegalCORPS when appropriate.

Scope of Service

In addition to free legal advice, such as our Brief Advice Clinics, we offer many educational opportunities to help businesses succeed. Our scope of service does not extend to representing clients in legal disputes, court filings, or lawsuits, including any matters that are or could become the subject of litigation.



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. By reducing this critical barrier, our services play a key role in starting, maintaining, and protecting the interests of entrepreneurs and business owners, as well as helping our cultural corridors to thrive.





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.



Charles Bennett, LegalCORPS Board President, Roxanne Thorelli, *2025 Pro Bono Champion*, and Nicole Deters, LegalCORPS Executive Director



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

BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS

For owners of businesses or those who want to form a business, attorneys can provide the sound legal advice that can be essential for business success. Our mission is to increase access to legal assistance for entrepreneurs and business owners, especially those that strengthen Minnesota communities.

Legal Issue Examples

- Entity formation and guidance on corporate structure
- Contracts and commercial leases
- Government regulation
- Employment
- Franchising
- Risk management
- Real estate
- Director duties and internal organization
- Commercial debtor/creditor rights and options



Legal Advice

LegalCORPS assists entrepreneurs and businesses with transactional business law matters. This can include document drafting, general guidance, negotiation, and other non-litigation (court) services in many areas of business law. LegalCORPS does not help with matters in litigation, but we can arrange for advice and assistance that could help mitigate risk and prevent litigation down the line.





LEGALCORPS PROGRAMS

NONPROFIT PROGRAMS

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



LEGALCORPS GET INVOLVED



Featuring a photo from the LegalCORPS 2025 Volunteer & Client Appreciation Event

Volunteer Opportunities

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

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

Support for Volunteers

LegalCORPS works to support and meet the needs of the volunteers who directly deliver pro bono services that LegalCORPS provides to qualifying businesses, entrepreneurs, and small nonprofits.

Pro Bono Service Recordkeeping

Our database includes the hours of pro bono service to LegalCORPS clients that our volunteers report, and we can provide those figures (both individual and aggregate) when volunteers need them. Volunteers are required to submit case closing summaries to help ensure LegalCORPS is able to maintain funding and meeting reporting requirements.

Support During Pro Bono Service

LegalCORPS can serve as an intermediary to enhance communication and understanding between attorneys and clients when needed. LegalCORPS also can recruit experienced business lawyers to confer with less-experienced volunteers as they assist pro bono clients through LegalCORPS.

Professional Liability Insurance

LegalCORPS maintains an insurance policy that provides professional liability coverage for attorneys when they provide pro bono legal assistance via LegalCORPS.

Assistance from Law Student Volunteers

Working with the Minnesota Justice Foundation, LegalCORPS often arranges for law students to assist volunteer attorneys in their pro bono work for LegalCORPS clients.

Continuing Legal Education and Training

By providing its own sessions, co-sponsoring seminars with other organizations or offering free or reduced-cost access to others' programs, LegalCORPS works to help its volunteers prepare for high-quality service to their pro bono clients.

LEGALCORPS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Fredrickson & Byron, P.A.

Courtney Poja
Vice President
Cornerstone Advocacy Services

Derek Goodman
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Emma Kasiga
Member at Large
Saint Paul Port Authority

Patsy Bartley
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Lisa Fulton
Solventum

Ann Gallagher
3M Company

Nick Hansen
Customer Experience
Professionals Association

Laurie Huotari
Lathrop GPM

Katie Johnson
Winthrop & Weinstine

Kathy Kirschbaum
U.S. Bank

Michael Kuhn
Ballard Spahr LLP

Mark Privratsky
Prudential Financial

Justina Roberts
Graco Inc.

Christina Sans
Huntington National Bank

Ann Steingraeber
Cargill, Incorporated

R. Meg Steurer
Minnestar

Donna Suchy
iRenew

Lyle Wright
Minnesota Department of Employment
and Economic Development (DEED)

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Neil M. Meyer
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SBDC Twin Cities
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Opus College of Business

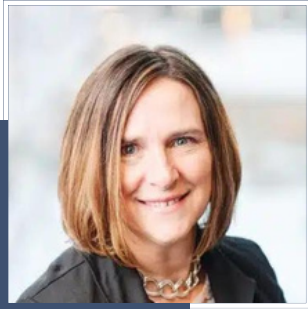
Martin R. Rosenbaum
Maslon LLP

Tom Triplett
Triplett Consulting, LLC

Tammera Diehm
Winthrop & Weinstine



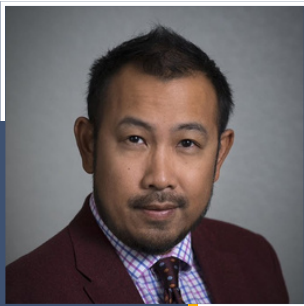
LEGALCORPS TEAM



Nicole Deters, MPA, PACC
Executive Director



Joshua D. Franklin, Esq.
Legal Services Director



Tiko Lieou
Pro Bono Programs Director



Jackie Craig
Strategic Engagement Director



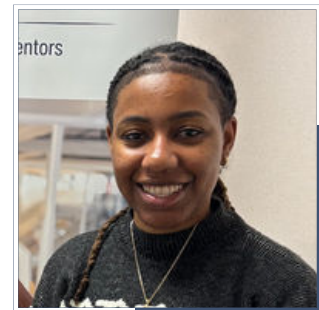
Ben Hackett
Program Lead and
Development Specialist



Francisco Martinez
Staff Attorney



Anastasia Walton
Nonprofit
Programs Specialist



A photograph of two men in a workshop or construction site. They are both wearing yellow hard hats and safety glasses. The man on the left is wearing a plaid shirt and is looking at a tablet held by the man on the right. The man on the right is also wearing a plaid shirt over a white t-shirt and blue gloves. They are standing in front of a workbench with various tools and materials. A black toolbox is visible on the right side of the workbench.

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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