

BLUE RIDGE LEGAL SERVICES, INC.



ANNUAL REPORT 2004

"Equal justice under law"

*Funded in part by the Legal
Services Corporation*



A United Way Supported Charity:

- . Franklin Co.*
- . Front Royal-Warren Co.*
- . Greater Alleghany United Fund*
- . Greater Augusta United Way*
- . Harrisonburg-Rockingham Co.*
- . Lexington-Rockbridge Co.*
- . Northern Shenandoah Valley*
- . Page Co.*
- . Roanoke Valley*



Table of Contents

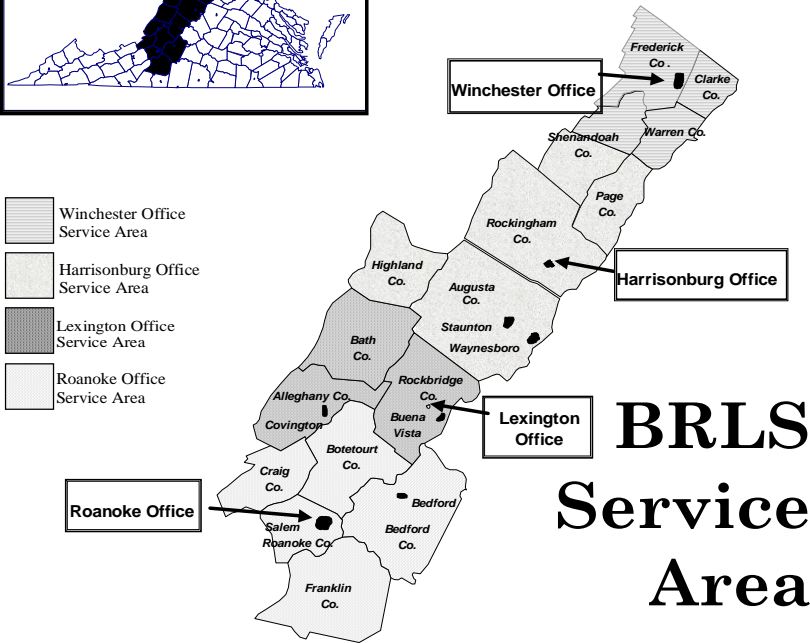
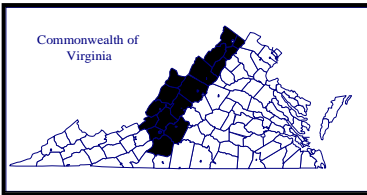
Mission	2
Our Services	3
Eligibility Criteria	4
BRLS Office Information	5
Board Of Directors	7
BRLS Staff	8
Casework in 2004	10
Outcomes Achieved in 2004	16
Pro Bono Programs	19
Other Program Developments	20
Statement of Support, Revenue and Expenses	22
Statement of Financial Position	23
What Our Clients Say	24

Visit www.brls.org

Our Mission

Blue Ridge Legal Services (BRLS) is a private, non-profit charitable law firm established to provide free, high quality legal assistance in civil matters of critical importance to low-income residents of the Shenandoah Valley and Roanoke Valley.

BRLS is committed to eliminating poverty-based inequities in the civil justice system by providing legal services without charge to folks who could not otherwise obtain such services because of their poverty. This mission is premised on the recognition that the American ideal of “Equal Justice for All” can only be realized if the poor have meaningful access to our judicial system. Otherwise, the principle of equal justice remains a hollow promise.



CASE SUMMARIES

Interspersed throughout this Annual Report you will find brief summaries of illustrative cases handled by BRLS staff and volunteer (“*pro bono*”) attorneys during 2004. These examples should provide a clearer picture of the work BRLS engages in, and the results achieved, on behalf of our clients.

BRLS is part of a nationwide network of nonprofit legal aid programs providing free legal assistance to those who qualify because of their poverty. We are one of the thirteen such legal aid societies licensed by the Virginia State Bar serving various geographical areas of the Commonwealth. We are **not** a government agency. However, our activities are regulated by federal and state law and the various grant conditions of our funding sources.

Our Services

Blue Ridge Legal Services employs a small staff of attorneys, paralegals, and support staff in offices located in Winchester, Harrisonburg, Lexington, and Roanoke. Our legal staff is supplemented by the donated services of over 450 private attorneys throughout the Shenandoah Valley and Roanoke Valley who have agreed to handle cases we refer to them on a *pro bono* basis, without charge.

Our legal assistance ranges from advice or brief service to ongoing representation in negotiations and litigation in state and federal courts and administrative agencies, depending on the needs of the client, the type of case, and available resources.

The most common legal problems handled by Blue Ridge Legal Services include:

- Family disputes (such as protection from domestic violence, child custody, divorce)
 - Problems dealing with debts and bankruptcy
-

- Housing and landlord-tenant disputes
- Eligibility for various government benefits (such as food stamps, TANF, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits)
- Access to health care (for example, issues involving Medicaid and Medicare)
- Consumer disputes, and
- Issues affecting seniors (such as exploitation and problems with nursing homes).

We do not handle criminal matters, traffic violations, personal injuries or malpractice cases and other cases outside of our priorities. We reserve the right to decline representation in a particular matter based on priorities established by our Board of Directors, existing caseloads, ethical considerations, and the merits of the case itself.

Eligibility Criteria

Financial eligibility for our services is based primarily on the number of persons in the applicant's household, the household's income and resources, as well as the type of case involved. BRLS does not use a sliding fee scale. If the applicant is eligible, the services are free. If the applicant is "over-income," then no services can be provided. Because of financial support we receive from Valley Program for Aging Services and the Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging, we are able to assist some senior citizens who might not otherwise qualify for our services.

According to the 2000 Census, there are nearly 79,000 residents within BRLS' service area living in poverty and, therefore, generally eligible for assistance from BRLS.

Unfortunately, limited funding and resources prevent us from being able to provide legal assistance to every low-income resident of our service area who might need such assistance in a civil (*i.e.*, non-criminal) matter. Instead, our Board of Directors has adopted a system of case priorities that we utilize to make case acceptance decisions.

BRLS Office Information

Winchester Office

- Service Area:** Serves the City of Winchester and the counties of Clarke, Frederick, northern Shenandoah, and Warren.
- Address:** P.O. Box 436
119 South Kent Street
Winchester, VA 22604
- Phone:** (540) 662-5021
- Toll-free:** (800) 678-5021
- Intake Hours:** 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays.

Harrisonburg Office

- Service Area:** Serves the cities of Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Waynesboro and the counties of Augusta, Highland, Page, Rockingham and southern Shenandoah.
- Address:** P. O. Box 551
204 N. High Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22803
- Phone:** (540) 433-1830
- Toll-free:** (800) 237-0141
- Intake Hours:** 9:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday

Lexington Office

- Service Area:** Serves the cities of Buena Vista, Covington, and Lexington, and the counties of Alleghany, Bath, and Rockbridge.
- Address:** 203 North Main Street
Lexington, VA 24450
- Phone:** (540) 463-7334
- Toll-free:** (866) 534-5243; or (540) 862-7642 (local call for applicants and clients in Covington and Alleghany County)
- Intake Hours:** 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

Roanoke Office

- Service Area:** Serves the cities of Bedford, Roanoke, and Salem, and the counties of Bedford, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke.
- Address:** 132 Campbell Ave., SW Suite 300
Roanoke, VA 24011
- Phone:** (540) 344-2080
- Toll-free:** (866) 534-5243
- Intake Hours:** 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

Visit www.brls.org

CASE SUMMARY #1

Ms. S had qualified for a Section 8 housing subsidy voucher when she lived in New York. She later married, moved to the Shenandoah Valley, and added her new husband's name on the voucher. After they had been married for a short time, her husband began physically abusing her. Mrs. S was forced to flee to a domestic violence shelter, and she eventually returned to New York to be with her mother.

When Ms. S contacted the local housing authority to have her voucher "ported" back to New York, as required by federal law, the director of the local housing authority refused to do so, maintaining that she did not believe that any domestic violence had actually occurred. In the meantime, the abusive husband was continuing to receive subsidy payments under the voucher where the couple formerly lived.

Ms. S provided the housing authority with numerous documents supporting her allegations, including an assault conviction of the abusive husband. Even so, for several months the housing authority simply refused to return her phone calls or tell her what further documentation was necessary. Ms. S suspected that her husband was close friends with one of the employees of the housing authority. Furthermore, rent in New York is three times more expensive than rent in Staunton, and if the client were allowed to take the voucher to New York, the housing authority would be responsible for paying her New York rent until a New York housing authority could add her to its Section 8 enrollment. This process could take more than a year. This could also be a factor in the Housing Authority's intransigence.

It was at this point Ms. S sought the assistance of BRLS. The BRLS attorney sent the housing authority a demand letter detailing the legal obligation to either give the client her voucher or explain in writing why they were refusing to do so. Shortly thereafter, the Housing Authority's Section 8 manager agreed to allow Ms. S to port her voucher back to New York.

Board Of Directors

BRLS is governed by a Board of Directors, of whom two-thirds are attorneys, usually appointed by their local bar associations, and a third are eligible clients appointed by community organizations serving the poor. The Board establishes general program policies defining the types of cases to be handled, eligibility guidelines, *etc.*, within the limitations imposed by the grant conditions of the program's funding sources and controlling state and federal law. In 2004, the following individuals served on the Board of Directors of Blue Ridge Legal Services (appointing organizations are listed in italics):

Officers:

Dana J. Cornett, Esq., President
Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association

James Bumbry, Vice President
Lincoln Terrace Residents' Council

Dr. Arthur J. Hamilton, Esq., Secretary/Treasurer
Department of Political Science, James Madison University

Directors:

Roy V. Creasy, Esq.
Roanoke City Bar Association

Tonya S. Jodrie
Response, Inc.

Mary L.C. Daniel, Esq.
Winchester-Frederick Co. Bar Ass'n

Richard Nichols
Roanoke Presbyterian Community Center

Richard L. Derrico, Esq.
Roanoke City Bar Association

Randall T. Perdue, Esq.
Augusta Co. Bar Association

Eugene E. Derryberry, Esq.
Total Action Against Poverty

Holly S. Peters, Esq.
Salem/Roanoke County Bar Ass'n

Helen Elliott
First Step, Inc.

Christopher B. Russell, Esq.
Rockbridge-Buena Vista Bar Ass'n

Robert C. Hagan, Jr., Esq.
Botetourt County Bar Association

Gary E. Tegenkamp, Esq.
Roanoke City Bar Association

Anna Hammond, Esq.
Warren County Bar Ass'n

Laura Wine
Mercy House, Inc.

Lewis Hancock
NAMI Roanoke Valley

CASE SUMMARY #2

Ms. B was a mentally challenged young woman who came to the Lexington office of BRLS seeking assistance with her claim for SSI. Her medical records were sparse, in part due to her age. She had applied for SSI while a teenager, but said the case "never went anywhere."

The BRLS attorney requested that the Social Security Administration schedule a "consultative exam" with a mental health provider, which yielded a report favorable to our case. When reviewing the file prior to the hearing, the BRLS attorney noticed references to the previous claim the client had filed in 1998. She had indeed been denied initially and on reconsideration, but she had timely requested an appeal hearing in 1999. However, there appeared to have been no disposition of that case. Further inquiry revealed the file had somehow been lost in the shuffle all those years.

The BRLS attorney requested the Administrative Law Judge to find Ms. B disabled back to her original application date of October 1998, which he did. Ms. B ultimately received Social Security benefits totaling over \$18,000. She used some of the money to pay her bill at Community Services Board and reinstate their mental health services, and some of the money to buy a used mobile home, where she now lives.

BRLS Staff

After losing two domestic violence staff attorneys because of the loss of our federal Violence Against Women grant in 2003, we were at least able to stave off any further staffing cuts in 2004. However, our inability to replace the lost attorney positions exacerbated the serious and inexorable tension between attempting to meet the demand for services from eligible clients and the respon-

sibility to provide high quality services to clients whose representation we have undertaken.

At the close of 2004, the staff consisted of:

Winchester Office

Nancy J. Glickman, *Managing Attorney*
Debbie Lanham, *Legal Secretary/Referral Coordinator*
Jennifer Locke, *Staff Attorney*
Becky Stallard, *Intake Paralegal*

Harrisonburg Office

Lee Dunham, *Staff Attorney*
Susan Haag, *Legal Secretary*
Kimberle H. Harding, *Staff Attorney*
Wanda Holsapple, *Administrator*
Janet R. Ikenberry, *Referral Coordinator*
Julie Jackson, *Intake Paralegal*
Jeffrey A. Link, *Staff Attorney*
David Martin, *Staff Attorney*
Anne S. See, *Elderly Services Paralegal*
John E. Whitfield, *Executive Director/General Counsel*

Lexington Office

Robin Mayer, *Managing Attorney*
Kieran Bartley, *Staff Attorney*
Melissa Bloomrose, *Intake Paralegal*

Roanoke Office

Ann Barlow, *Referral Coordinator*
Sue O'Bryant, *Intake Paralegal*
Nancy Mills, *Legal Secretary*
Susan C. Proctor, *Managing Attorney*

In addition to our regular staff, we have a number of Washington and Lee University law students working in our Lexington and Harrisonburg offices as part of a clinic we operate in conjunction with the law school. We have also been fortunate in securing law student interns during the summer months without cost to the program. In the summer of 2004 four law students worked in the Harrisonburg office.

We also have a number of college student interns, work-study students, and volunteers working in the Harrisonburg office each semester. They assist in a wide range of support activities, from filing to fact-finding.

CASE SUMMARY #3

Back in the mid-1970's when her husband passed away, Gertrude C. purchased two burial lots, one for her departed husband, the other for herself along side her husband's plot. She paid his lot in full at the time he was buried. She made payments on the second lot and believed she had paid it in full. When she checked into it decades later she was told that she never finished paying on her lot, and that the cemetery owners were treating it as a defaulted contract. In order to be buried beside her beloved husband, she would now have to re-purchase the lot and pay a much higher purchase price for it.

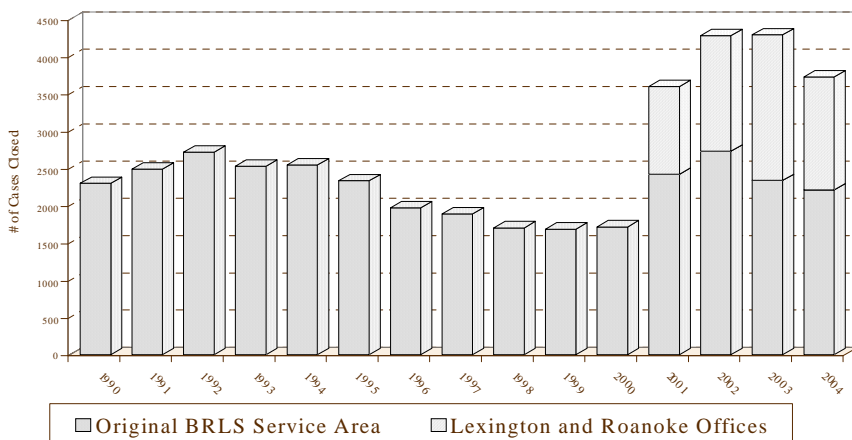
It was at this point that she sought the assistance of Blue Ridge Legal Services. Working with a William & Mary law student intern, the BRLS elderly services attorney calculated that our client would only owe at most approximately \$50.00 under the original contract, based on the language of the original contract and the various contract rates of interest set in the Code of Virginia since the 1970's.

When the cemetery corporation refused to accept a tender of this balance, a lawsuit was filed by the BRLS attorney. Once the court papers were filed and served, the cemetery's attorney quickly agreed to accept the \$50.00 and our client finally received a deed to her burial lot, next to her beloved deceased husband.

Casework in 2004

The number of cases closed during 2004 declined significantly from the previous year: 3736 cases were closed in 2004 by staff and pro bono attorneys, compared with 4294 cases in 2003. See the graph titled "Cases Closed Annually 1990-2004." (With reference to that graph, 1992 represented the height of an economic recession. The Lexington and Roanoke offices were integrated into the program in 2001.) The 13% decline in the number of cases closed is attrib-

Total Cases Closed Annually 1990-2004



utable to a number of factors, including the loss of the two domestic violence attorney positions in late 2003-early 2004; a staff attorney vacancy in Harrisonburg in the summer; a staff attorney in Winchester being on maternity leave; a large-scale reorganization in a large Roanoke law firm that has been a mainstay in that office's Pro Bono Hotline, which caused a temporary disruption in the function of the hotline; and several support staff in Roanoke being on medical leave for significant periods of time during the year.

Most of decline in cases came in the Roanoke office. See the accompanying table. In the Winchester, Lexington and Harrisonburg offices, the decline in cases closed was less significant.

Office	2003	2004	Net Change
Winchester	726	646	-80
Harrisonburg	1612	1566	-46
Lexington	673	580	-93
Roanoke	1283	937	-346

BRLS provided assistance to clients throughout its service area, including the more far-flung rural counties as well as the cities. In order to assure easy access for clients in the outlying counties, BRLS provides toll-free telephone service in each of its offices.

Cases Closed By Locality - 2004

Locality	BRLS Staff	Volunteer Attorneys	Totals
Alleghany County	91	0	91
Augusta County	343	31	374
Bath County	7	0	7
Bedford, City of	13	9	22
Bedford County	33	35	68
Botetourt County	16	26	42
Buena Vista, City of	63	0	63
Clarke County	38	0	38
Covington, City of	98	0	98
Craig County	3	16	19
Franklin County	63	52	115
Frederick County	212	25	237
Harrisonburg, City of	260	33	293
Highland County	6	1	7
Lexington, City of	58	0	58
Page County	145	24	169
Roanoke, City of	165	323	488
Roanoke County	32	92	124
Rockbridge County	167	2	169
Rockingham County	290	39	329
Salem, City of	13	37	50
Shenandoah County	139	6	145
Staunton, City of	187	20	207
Warren County	86	15	101
Waynesboro, City of	156	14	170
Winchester, City of	155	22	177
Other Virginia	25	8	33
Other USA	<u>35</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>42</u>
TOTALS	2899	837	3736

CASE SUMMARY #4

A Harrisonburg man sought assistance from BRLS after his six year old son's former doctor from northern Virginia refused to release the child's medical records until the father paid an outstanding bill for \$75 resulting from an alleged missed appointment. The family had recently relocated to the area and needed the medical records for the boy's new psychiatrist so he could prescribe Ritalin for his ADHD. The BRLS attorney drafted and faxed a demand letter to the former psychiatrist in northern Virginia, citing provisions of Virginia law that guarantee a patient's right to obtain copies of his medical records. The doctor released the records that same day and the child's prescription was refilled without further incident.

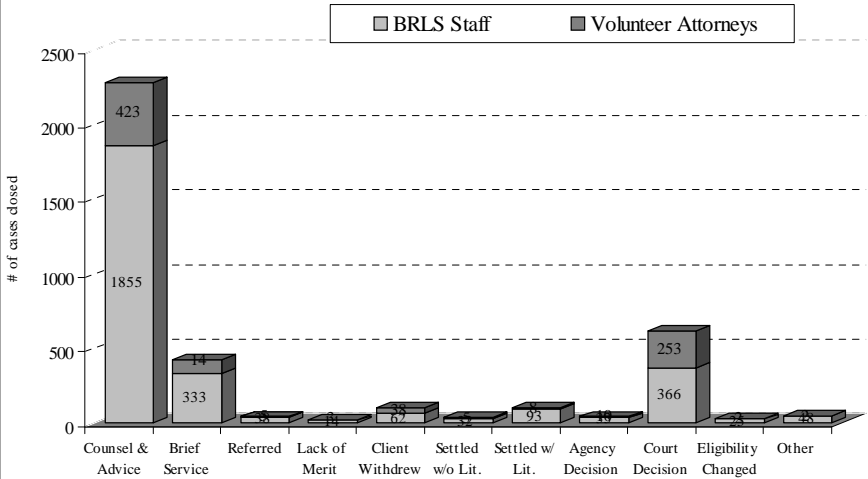
In 73% of the cases closed, BRLS provided only advice, brief service, or a referral. See the graph "Types of Services Rendered Programwide 2004." Another 5% of the cases were discontinued because of lack of merit, the withdrawal or disappearance of the client, or a change in eligibility.

Ongoing representation (including BRLS staff and *pro bono* cases) was provided in 22% of the cases closed, slightly fewer than the previous year. BRLS staff and volunteer attorneys negotiated 37 settlements without litigation, and they settled another 101 cases in litigation. Forty-three (43) cases were resolved by administrative agency decisions, while 619 cases were resolved by court decisions obtained by BRLS staff or volunteer attorneys. (It should be noted that many of these represent no fault divorce decrees obtained by staff or volunteer attorneys.)

Over 12% of the cases closed were for elderly clients. Roughly 18% of our clients were minorities, and over 77% of the clients served in 2004 were women.

Of the 3736 cases closed in 2004, 2899 were handled by BRLS legal staff, while 837 cases were closed by volunteer attorneys either accepting *pro bono* referrals under BRLS' Pro Bono Referral Program or participating in the Roanoke office's Pro Bono Hotline.

Types of Services Rendered Programwide 2004



CASE SUMMARY #5

Mr. H contacted BRLS in September 2004 after the Department of Motor Vehicles refused to replace his missing driver's license without a birth certificate, due to a change in policy after the terrorists' attack on 9/11/01. Mr. H had been born in Scotland without the benefit of birth certificate, and he was made a ward of the Commonwealth of Virginia after his biological parents' rights were terminated. DMV was refusing to accept copies of his marriage license or his Social Security card.

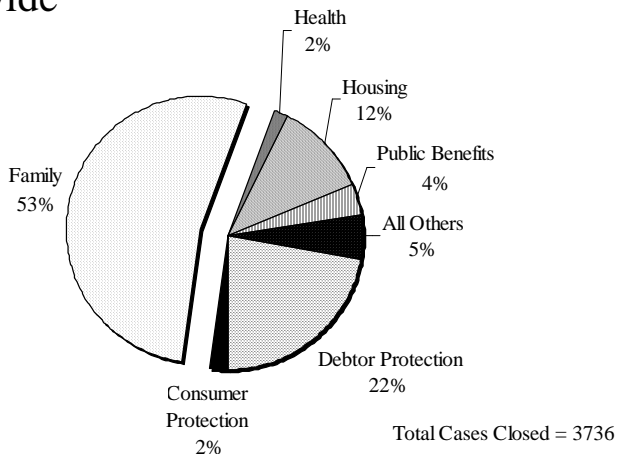
A BRLS attorney drafted an affidavit seeking a replacement birth certificate from the U.S. State Department. A Certificate of Reported Birth eventually arrived in November 2004 and Mr. H was able to obtain a new driver's license. He was most grateful especially as he had a job interview to help support his wife and two young children.

Family disputes (53%) constituted the largest category of cases closed in 2004. Debtors' issues comprised 22%, while Housing issues constituted 12%, followed by Public Benefits (4%), Consumer Protection and Health (2% each).

Cases Closed by Legal Category

Programwide

2004



CASE SUMMARY #6

Mrs. G and her husband are Russian immigrants who are in their 70's. They had left Russia because of religious persecution. Neither of them speaks or reads English. They are both in very poor health. They are Medicaid recipients and their only income is SSI. Their daughter, who came with them to the United States and on whom they depend heavily, has developed a brain tumor and becomes confused very easily.

Mrs. G had surgery for a hernia. Everyone was paid by Medicaid, except one doctor whose claim was denied. Ms. G's family presented the doctor with her insurance card, Virginia Premier. The family attempted to get the situation

(Continued on next page.)

(Continued from preceding page.)

resolved to no avail. Eventually, the doctor sued Ms. G for the bill. Ms. G. was very upset because the courts had been used to persecute her family in Russia.

When they sought assistance from BRLS, the BRLS attorney disputed the debt and requested a bill of particulars. About a week later the doctor voluntarily dismissed the lawsuit, confessing they had made a mistake and that Ms. G. did not owe the money. (They finally used the correct Medicaid card number!) This experience demonstrated to Ms. G. what a real difference there is between the American and Russian judicial systems.

Outcomes Achieved in 2004

Blue Ridge Legal Services systematically measures its success rate in cases involving on-going representation (*i.e.*, negotiated settlements, administrative agency decisions, and court decisions). Of the 694 such cases closed by BRLS staff or volunteer attorneys during 2004, the clients' goals were achieved in 89%; partially achieved in 7%; and not achieved in less than 4%. From these statistics, it is safe to conclude that the program is doing a good job of ascertaining the merits of the cases that are accepted for on-going representation.

BRLS also attempts to compile the measureable outcomes, if any, achieved in the cases closed. Of all the data compiled to measure the achievements for BRLS during the last year, these highlights reveal most powerfully the results of the legal work performed by BRLS staff and *pro bono* attorneys. Overall, this legal work achieved outcomes that benefited over 8700 low-income people, including affirmative lump sum recoveries of \$400,469; affirmative monthly recoveries of \$32,170; avoidance of \$2,256,174 in lump sum debts or damages; and avoidance of \$6,681 in monthly obligations. Following is a detailed summary of the outcomes achieved for low-income clients during 2004:

Debtor Relief and Consumer Issues

Obtained 87 bankruptcy discharges, discharging \$1,885,252 in debts while recovering \$5,487 in garnished wages.

Stopped or reduced debt collection actions against 35 clients, avoiding \$228,000 in debts and recovering \$1,467 in payments.

Averted repossession for 1 client, avoiding a loss of \$500.

Avoided deficiency judgments for 5 clients, avoiding some \$14,000 in claims.

Quashed 37 garnishments, liens, or levies, returning nearly \$25,000 in wages or property to the clients.

Defeated 2 illegal sales contracts, recovering \$500 for our clients.

Enforced warranties for 8 clients.

Avoided a utility termination for 2 clients.

Overcame fraudulent sales practices for 2 clients, saving them almost \$3,000.

Assisted 54 clients with consumer matters outside of litigation, including recovering \$8,000 for one client.

Provided advice and counsel or referral to 648 clients on debtor and consumer issues.

Family-Related Issues

Obtained adoptions for 9 families.

Obtained child custody orders for 45 clients, including over \$7,200 in monthly child support benefits and over \$26,000 in lump sum support.

Preserved child visitation rights for 13 clients.

Obtained divorces or annulments for 374 clients, including financial benefits of \$41,412 in lump sums and \$1,500 in monthly benefits.

Prepared Separation Agreements for 38 clients, including \$43,000 in financial benefits.

Established paternity for 2 children.

Obtained court protection for 30 victims of domestic violence, together with 15,200 in lump sum financial benefits and over \$4,000 in monthly support.

Obtained, preserved, or increased child support for 1 client of \$1,156 in monthly support.

Obtained, preserved, or increased spousal support for another 10 clients, including \$22,618 in lump sum awards and \$3,550 in monthly support.

Obtained a reduction in child support for 13 clients, including \$1500 in monthly reductions.

Assisted 17 clients with family matters outside of litigation, with over \$96,000 in financial benefits.

Provided advice and counsel or referral to 1289 other clients on family-related issues.

Access to Health Care Issues

Obtained, preserved, or increased Medicaid benefits for 19 clients, worth nearly \$6,000 in lump sum benefits and at least \$4,000 in monthly benefits.

Prevented denial of rights to 1 nursing home resident.

Obtained access to health care for 4 clients.

Housing Issues

Prevented evictions for 17 families, while recovering \$3,150 for them and successfully defending claims for \$8,000 in charges.

Delayed eviction for 26 families, while successfully defending claims for \$6,864 in charges.

Avoided one foreclosure.

Obtained access to housing for 2 families.

Avoided illegal charges imposed by landlords on another 19 families, saving nearly \$46,000.

Overcame denial of 2 tenants' rights under their leases.

Enforced 2 families' rights to habitable housing.

Restored 10 families' access to their personal property, worth \$32,500.

Obtained repairs to dwellings for 3 clients.

Obtained assistance in development of affordable housing for 2 families.

Provided non-litigation advocacy on behalf of 19 households in housing-related issues.

Provided counsel and advice or referral to 296 other clients with housing-related problems.

Other Public Benefit Issues

Assisted 1 client in obtaining TANF benefits, worth \$254 monthly.

Obtained, preserved, or increased food stamps for 3 families.

Obtained, preserved, or increased SSI and Social Security disability benefits for 25 clients, securing \$134,778 in lump sum benefits and \$5,815 in monthly benefits.

Obtained, preserved, or increased unemployment compensation benefits for 6 clients, with financial benefits of over \$14,000.

Overcame the denial of emergency assistance by Dept. of Social Services for 1 client.

Provided 2 clients with assistance in business startup.

Provided non-litigation advocacy on behalf of 17 households in benefit-related issues.

Provided counsel and advice to 64 other clients with public benefit issues.

Miscellaneous Matters

Obtained \$5,250 in pension benefits for one client.

Assisted 1 client outside of litigation in settling an employment matter, recovering almost \$2,000 in lump sum and \$1,300 monthly for the client.

Advised or referred 8 clients regarding employment issues.

Obtained appropriate special education for 1 child.

Advised and referred 4 clients regarding education issues.

Restored drivers' licenses for 3 clients.

Advised 8 clients on civil rights issues.

Prepared wills for 52 clients.

Prepared 56 living wills, powers of attorney, or health care proxy documents.

Provided representation for 19 clients in unsuccessful affirmative litigation.

Provided representation for 16 clients in unsuccessful defensive litigation.

Pro Bono Programs

Eight hundred thirty-seven (837) cases were closed by volunteer (“pro bono”) attorneys in our Pro Bono Hotline and Pro Bono Referral Program during 2004.

Three hundred fifty-eight (358) of these were closed as part of the Virginia Bar Association (VBA)'s Pro bono Hotline operated in our Roanoke office, in which volunteers recruited by the Young Lawyers Division of the VBA staff an advice “hotline” one afternoon each week. The Roanoke Pro Bono Hotline is one of several such hotlines sponsored by the VBA across Virginia. The VBA has received national recognition from the American Bar Association for its creation of these pro bono hotlines, receiving its prestigious Harrison Tweed Award in 1995.

Another 479 cases were closed through our Pro Bono Referral Program. Over 400 private attorneys throughout our service area have generously agreed to assist, without charge, clients who are referred to them by BRLS.

Over the years, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association has received state and national recognition for its outstanding commitment to *pro bono* work. In 1993, the national Legal Services Corporation awarded the Bar its Rural Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award. In 1995, it also received the prestigious Harrison Tweed Award from the American Bar Association in recognition for its work. In 1998 it was recognized by the Virginia State Bar when it was awarded the Lewis Powell Pro Bono Award.

Other bar associations across our service area similarly perform “yeoman's work” in providing *pro bono* assistance to low income clients referred to them by BRLS, without having yet received national and state awards. Several local bar associations in the Shenandoah Valley boast virtually 100% participation rates in our Pro Bono Referral Program, a tribute to the professionalism and generosity of the lawyers in our communities.

Representing over 22% of all BRLS cases, and over 36% of

those cases in which ongoing representation was provided, our *pro bono* programs are clearly important and successful components in BRLS' overall delivery of legal assistance. Nearly \$425,000 worth of legal services was donated to our clients by volunteer private attorneys handling *pro bono* cases. Because BRLS is an approved project under the Commonwealth's Neighborhood Assistance Program, many attorneys for a state income tax credit equal to 45% of the value of their donated services.

At the encouragement of Virginia Supreme Court Chief Justice Leroy Hassell, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association voted unanimously in December 2004 to organize a pilot project of the Chief Justice's new *pro bono* initiative, *Virginia Lawyers Helping Families*. In this program, volunteer attorneys will represent low-income parents in custody disputes. Experienced family lawyers will serve as mentors for less experienced practitioners.

Credit also goes to BRLS's three referral coordinators, Janet Ikenberry in Harrisonburg, Debbie Lanham in Winchester, and Ann Barlow in Roanoke for their committed efforts to keep our *pro bono* programs a vital part of BRLS' service delivery system.

Other Program Developments

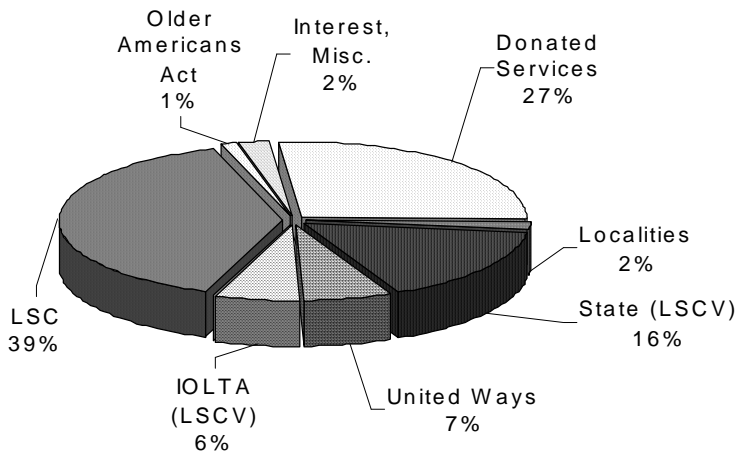
New Funding Supports Elderly Services. New funding from the United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, the United Way of Greater Augusta County, and the Virginia Law Foundation allowed us to create a new, permanent half-time attorney position in the Harrisonburg office focusing on providing legal services to the elderly. We were able to hire an experienced former legal services attorney, Anita Robinson, who had recently relocated with her family to the area.

Attorney Fundraising Campaign. Facing a projected budget deficit for 2005, BRLS launched an attorney fundraising campaign in December 2004. With a substantial donation from the Harrisonburg lawfirm Hoover Penrod, the campaign raised almost \$14,000.

Winchester Managing Attorney Honored. Nancy J. Glickman, managing attorney of the Winchester branch of Blue Ridge Legal Services, received the 2004 Virginia Legal Aid Award at the Virginia State Bar's annual meeting in Virginia Beach. The award recognizes a legal aid attorney in Virginia whose work has an impact beyond the attorney's own service area, who demonstrates experience, excellent service and innovation in advocacy on behalf of low-income clients. A native of New Rochelle, N.Y., Glickman worked for legal aid programs in Columbus, Ga., Evansville, Ind., and Asheville, N.C., before joining BRLS in 1989. Robert J. Stoney, chair of the VSB's Special Committee on Access to Legal Services, wrote that Glickman "is known for her extraordinary litigating, training, mentoring and leadership skills within the legal aid community. She is also held in high regard by colleagues in the private bar who note her collegiality, trial skills and astounding record of success in court..."

BRLS Receives Grant from SAW Community Foundation to Upgrade Local Outreach Offices. The Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro Community Foundation awarded BRLS a grant to upgrade equipment in its outreach offices in Staunton and Waynesboro. The grant also funded the purchase of a portable "personal listening system" to allow people with significant hearing loss to communicate with BRLS staff.

BRLS SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR 2004



Statement of Support, Revenue and Expenses

Year Ended December 31, 2004

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Grants and contracts	1,286,588
Interest	1,754
Donated services	443,771
Contributions	12,849
Other Income	17,811
Net assets released from restrictions	
Expiration of time or purpose restrictions	<u> -</u>
Total support and revenue	\$1,762,773

EXPENSES

Lawyer wages	\$461,923
Paralegal wages	35,253
Non-legal wages	261,721
Donated services	427,371
Employee benefits	211,780
Travel	20,325
Rent	46,220
Utilities and telephone	42,429
Office supplies, postage and printing	23,679
Advertising	6,509
Insurance	9,367
Professional dues	7,508
Repairs and maintenance	17,145
Litigation expenses	1,052
Equipment rental	1,887
Training and conferences	1,150
Independent contracts	7,261
Library materials	16,978
Miscellaneous	2,088
Statewide Website Project	90,348
Depreciation	<u>24,497</u>
Total expenses	\$1,716,491

Change in net assets	46,282
Net assets at beginning of year	\$817,374
Net assets at end of year	\$863,656

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2004

ASSETS**Current assets**

Cash	\$ 107,167
Cash in escrow, client deposit	3,806
Contributions receivable	711,128
Support receivable	5,844
Prepaid expenses	<u>4,877</u>
Total current assets	<u>832,822</u>

Property and equipment

Land	6,724
Building and improvements	105,224
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	324,662
Law library	<u>18,695</u>
	455,305
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>376,169</u>
Total property and equipment	<u>79,136</u>

Total assets \$ 911,958**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS****Current liabilities**

Accounts payable	\$ 6,396
Accrued annual leave	38,100
Client deposits	<u>3,806</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>48,302</u>

Net assets

Unrestricted	138,899
Temporarily Restricted	<u>724,757</u>
Total net assets	<u>863,656</u>

Total liabilities and net assets \$ 911,958

Comments from BRLS Clients

"You done a very good job. I'm glad you helped us out." – Alleghany Co. resident.

"Ms. Proctor and staff were very professional, courteous and well-knowledged!" – Roanoke resident.

"The outcome was excellent. Only God knows the good you are doing to help people." – Harrisonburg resident.

"It helped me to feel more safer in regards to my abusive husband to keep him away from me." – Harrisonburg resident.

"I hope services like this are always available for low-income families and individuals since they are so important to protect the citizens' rights." – Winchester resident.

"I've had four strokes, major brain surgery on top of so much other, it was a God-send to have this done." – Lexington resident.

"The secretary and the attorney treated me with kindness and did everything to get the situation resolved. Thanks and God bless." – Warren County resident.

"The outcome of my case was great, and it changed my life in so many different ways, and I thank my attorney, Kim Harding for all her hard work, persistence and promptness." – Waynesboro resident.

"I'm so happy to have met a person like Anne See. She went the extra mile to help someone like me." – Page County resident.

"My [pro bono] lawyer was one of the nicest persons I have ever met. Just remembering the kindness in his eyes has given me inner strength." –Roanoke resident.

"This is a wonderful service for seniors who are on a fixed income. It's good to know there are services like yours we can turn to." – Winchester resident.

"The person handling my case was very helpful, explained everything very well, always very nice and easy to talk to. She was a jewel." – Harrisonburg resident.

"You are a real asset to the community." -- Augusta County resident.

"Thanks Nancy Glickman at BRLS and her help and concern in this case." -- Shenandoah County resident.

"It took worry off my mind-saved me from unfair charges I did not owe. I deeply appreciate the help given." -- Rockbridge County resident.

"I was so impressed with the professionalism of the staff and lawyer, it made what I had to go through so much easier." --Lexington resident.

"[Pro bono attorney] Ellen Weiman was the reason the adoption was successful. Without her help we may never have been able to adopt our grandchildren and keep them safe." -- Roanoke County resident.