



The Justice Journal

Maryland Legal Aid's Quarterly Newsletter

1st Edition of the Justice Journal

Welcome to *The Justice Journal*, Maryland Legal Aid's new quarterly newsletter! Every quarter, we will share stories about our vital work, significant developments, and our partnerships with you, our volunteers and supporters.

This inaugural issue highlights a special moment at Maryland Legal Aid: the launch of our new rebranded look and strategic plan that will guide our work for the next five years.

Building on our more than one-hundred-year history and informed by our staff, clients and key stakeholders, we have set a bold, new strategic direction that lays out a compelling mission and core values to which we aspire. In this plan, we recognize the interconnected challenges our clients face and commit to combating the systemic issues that perpetuate poverty and inequity. We also acknowledge the critical need to build our organizational capacity and harness data to be more innovative, efficient and effective.

Throughout, we seek to build a culture rooted in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to help us realize our vision of a world in which dignity, equity, and justice are a lived reality for all.

We hope you find *The Justice Journal* informative and inspiring. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Vicki Schultz

In This Issue



[MLA Sues Baltimore City Over Tax Sales](#)



[25th Annual Equal Justice Awards Breakfast](#)



[Equal Justice Associates Happy Hour](#)

Read the Strategic
Plan



Maryland Legal Aid Sues Baltimore City Over Unconstitutional Tax Sale Auctions

In July, Maryland Legal Aid filed a federal lawsuit against the City of Baltimore, claiming the city's property tax sale auction process unconstitutionally strips property owners of their equity without fair compensation. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of the Edmondson Community Organization (ECO), argues that auctioning liens on properties with overdue taxes disproportionately harms vulnerable populations, especially low-income Black and disabled property owners.

Lee Ogburn, Maryland Legal Aid's Advocacy Director for Appellate and Impact Litigation, stated, "This case builds on the principle confirmed by the US Supreme Court just last year that 'a government may not take more from a taxpayer than she owes.' Baltimore City violated that principle when it took ECO's \$140,000 building for a \$2,500 tax bill and then offered ECO only \$2,500 for its loss."

The lawsuit aims to bring about systemic changes to Baltimore's tax sale practices, which have led to significant losses for property owners while generating negligible revenue for the city. This case highlights the broader struggle for justice and equity in property ownership and the fight against policies that disproportionately impact marginalized communities.



- [Associated Press](#): For years, crumbs of cannabis impacted a Maryland man's life. Now he sees a clearer future.
- [CBS News](#): Baltimore City sued by MLA over tax sale practices
- [The Appeal](#): New HUD rule boosts fair housing access for people with criminal records
- [The Daily Record](#): Tenant advocates say 4th Circuit ruling on Baltimore ordinance shows need for legislative change

Donor Profile: Why I Give

Patrick Moulding has been a generous donor since 2006. Here is his response when asked why he donates to MLA:

"I'm proud to support Maryland Legal Aid. You are tireless and compassionate advocates for the most vulnerable communities all across our state, helping people protect themselves and their families.

As demonstrated in the powerful testimonials from your clients, the team's dedication and high-quality legal counsel continues to change – and save – lives. It also inspires me how Maryland Legal Aid's work makes a difference not only by helping individuals but by pursuing cases that have the potential to advance justice at a broader scale (for example, through appellate advocacy in defense of low-income tenants). Thank you for your commitment to standing up for not only the legal rights but also the human dignity of so many Marylanders in need."

Ways to Give

Whether you donate your time as a pro bono volunteer or make financial contributions, your support helps provide transformative legal help for Marylanders with low-income and is sincerely appreciated.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the many ways you can help Maryland Legal Aid improve access to justice, or click the Donate Now button to make a gift online.



Donate Now



25th Annual Equal Justice Awards Breakfast

On May 21, Maryland Legal Aid and the Equal Justice Council celebrated 25 years of recognizing the law firms, lawyers and other community partners who have made a meaningful difference in ensuring all Marylanders have a fair shot at justice. Senator Ben Cardin gave an inspiring keynote address reminding us of the critical role lawyers play in preserving the rule of law and received the Exemplar of Equal Justice Award.

Maryland Legal Aid also presented the inaugural Carlos Braxton Legacy Award to Ko Alexander, an exceptionally dedicated paralegal in our Bel Air office. This award honors the memory of Carlos Braxton, a former board member who passed away in 2021 after battling cancer. The award was made possible by a generous contribution from board member Lauren Lacey. Click below to see the full list of honorees.

[Event Recap and Honorees](#)

Pro Bono Corner



[Pro Bono Profile](#)

Upcoming Pro Bono Clinics

Interested in providing pro bono legal help for clients in need? Check out these opportunities:

Thursday, Oct 10
[Expungement Clinic at the Towanda Recreation Center](#)

Saturday, Oct 26
[Expungement Clinic at Johns Hopkins](#)

[Full List of Pro Bono Cases and Clinics](#)



Thank you to pro bono attorney Marylin Jill Harris for her outstanding work in helping a disabled client in Baltimore City draft her will! Thanks to Jill's dedication, the client has peace of mind knowing that her home will now be able to pass to her children.



EJA Summer Event

Maryland Legal Aid's Equal Justice Associates (EJA) presented the EJA Summer Soiree on June 27. We were thrilled to have over 60 young lawyers with us for a wonderful event at the Penthouse in Baltimore Peninsula. Special guest speakers Justice Angela Eaves from the Supreme Court of Maryland and Kelly Robier of Kramon & Graham highlighted the profound impact a young lawyer can have as a pro bono attorney.

The EJA is a group of young lawyers who are dedicated to Maryland Legal Aid's mission of improving access to justice for all Marylanders. EJA members serve as ambassadors on behalf of Maryland Legal Aid to help meet the need for civil legal assistance among Marylanders with low income.

Learn More About the
EJA

Champions of Justice

Law firms that donate at the Champion of Justice level set the standard among the private bar by contributing at least \$300 per Maryland attorney or \$25,000+ per year. The generous support from these firms makes a meaningful difference toward ensuring access to justice for all.

If your firm is interested in becoming a Champion of Justice this year, please contact Graham Cowger at gcowger@mdlaborg.org for more info.



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