



California Western Community Law Project 2022 in Review

"And the seasons, they go 'round and 'round!'". While much of CLP looks like it did pre-pandemic, we have adapted to changing times and changing needs. In a "looking at the silver linings" fashion, the pandemic forced some critical changes upon our program and many of these modifications have worked to make our program stronger. We are back to "meeting clients where they are" but in so many ways, doing more than merely "meeting" them. Our students are thoughtfully addressing clients' legal needs, while using resources in our comprehensive database to also provide holistic assistance. Clients continue to hear legal advice at our accessible clinic sites, but now also receive a personalized follow up email with user friendly links and other helpful information so they can successfully advocate for themselves. Communities continue to receive important information about their legal rights at our law student-led educational workshops, but also can utilize student created self-help legal resources within a variety of legal issues.

We are lucky to have clients regularly remind our staff and students of the impact of our program on individuals in San Diego. "Regardless of the outcome from this point forward, I want to express gratitude for your help (and the help of the entire CLP staff) with this matter. It has gone a long way."; "I know thank you is not enough, but I can't find a better word to show my appreciation."; "I was really happy and hopeful after talking to you...out of a dozen lawyers, you are the only ones that actually listen to what I'm saying."

Despite the enhancements made to our program, 2022 was truly a year of returning to CLP's roots. Our CLP corps of law students, undergraduate students, and volunteer attorneys volunteered over 3,000 hours of their time. This allowed CLP to host 140 free live legal clinics in the community, as well as provide 14 legal education presentations. During a time when many other organizations struggled to return to a live service model, I am proud of CLP's ability to return to our mission of literally meeting clients where they are.



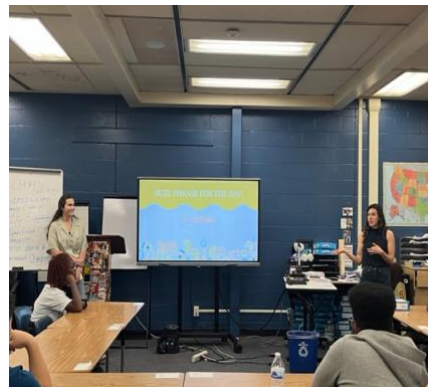
As part of the California Western School of Law, the Community Law Project staff values the opportunity to instill our law students with the passion and skills to be future advocates for those most in need. CLP's cheerful new office space on the campus of California Western has truly helped us fortify our connection with students and the campus community as a whole. This past year, we were fortunate to work with 32 committed second- and third-year law students. Many of these students worked with us for multiple trimesters, honing their client skills and collectively contributing hundreds of hours of time to vulnerable individuals in our County. As shared by our students, CLP is a two-way street; they get as much as (or perhaps more than) they give:

"This program has provided me with the ability to empower members of the community and I love it. For me, CLP has been the most rewarding and beneficial experience I have had in law school." - Chris, CLP Intern, Summer and Fall 2022

“It’s not always necessarily being able to fix the client’s problem, sometimes it is doing well the things we can control, like being kind, patient, understanding, calm, and eager to listen.” - Rachael, CLP Intern, Fall 2022

“I believe [my goals with CLP were] best achieved when I was able to serve individuals who would otherwise not be able to voice their legal concerns. Coming from a predominantly Hispanic community and being raised by parents who do not speak English, it was extremely rewarding when I was able to utilize the language my parents taught me to give individuals like them a voice.” - Raul, CLP Intern, Spring 2022

CLP is pleased to share that 2022 was our most successful year to date financially thanks to philanthropic foundations and individuals who believe strongly in the impact we are making in San Diego. In addition to the continued generous support of the American College of Bankruptcy Foundation, we experienced an increase in funding from long-time funders such as Price Philanthropies and the San Diego County Bar Foundation, a resurgence in funding from the Parker Foundation who supported CLP years ago when we were just coming into our own as an organization, and first-time grant support from the Copley Foundation and Cushman Foundation. We are excited to continue to demonstrate to all of these organizations the significant effect that their generosity has in the hands of the Community Law Project!



While of course this year brought its challenges (mainly in the form of not having sufficient resources to serve the incredibly high number of individuals who continue to pour through our clinic doors), it is the Community Law Project’s successes that bring me joy. Among other things, this year I got to see the look of pure relief on a sexual harassment victim’s face when our CLP student assured her that what she had experienced was illegal and that she could hold her employer liable; hear the eager voices of high school students as they excitedly called out the answers to our law students’ questions demonstrating the knowledge they had gained during a community presentation; and observe the visible emotional and intellectual growth of our law students as they learned how to work with vulnerable community members. CLP’s recognition as Nonprofit of the Year for California Assembly District 78 was merely icing on the cake to a year full of successes. We remain excited about the prospects to come, and we welcome and appreciate the continued support from our community as we strive to continuously improve and grow as an organization. To learn more about CLP, our services, and our clinics, please take a look at our website (www.cwclp.org), Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityLawProject>), or Twitter (<https://twitter.com/CalWesternCLP>). To make a donation to CLP, please visit <https://cosmos.cwsl.edu/giving/communitylawproject/>.

Thank you for your continued commitment to justice and clinical legal education,
Dana Sisitsky, Associate Professor and Executive Director, California Western Community Law Project