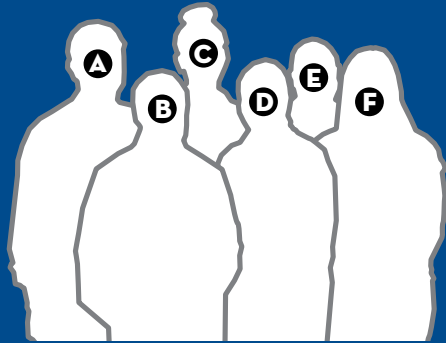




JUSTICE FOR EVERYONE



2012 ANNUAL REPORT



On the Cover

As the son of a country singer, Eddie Walker (A) grew up in the San Fernando Valley with the sounds of Nashville in his ears. When his house burned down in 2007, he fell victim to people who took the insurance money and the replacement home it had bought. Public Counsel and *pro bono* attorneys from Sidley Austin have asked a judge to restore his home.

Ethiopian-born Hayat Ahmed (B) was a victim of human trafficking brought to the U.S. against her will. Public Counsel won asylum for her, and now she is saving up for an apartment of her own – her first after more than 20 years of forced servitude.

Rosie (C) wound up in foster care after her mother died when she was 13. But she didn't stop believing in herself. "I do have a meaningful life, I do have a purpose," she said. Public Counsel gives Rosie and other foster youth intensive advocacy that helps them make informed choices about their education and life after foster care.

Channa Grace (D) is president of Women Organizing Resources Knowledge & Services, an affordable housing developer with a special focus on food justice. "We not only house people but provide sustainable, locally grown and organic foods," she said. Public Counsel secured *pro bono* attorneys from Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher who are giving W.O.R.K.S. the legal support it needs to grow.

V. Jesse Smith (E) is a co-founder of The Community Action League and president of the NAACP Antelope Valley Branch. He was a plaintiff in *TCAL v. Lancaster et al.*, a federal case brought by Public Counsel and others that vindicated the rights of thousands of black and Latino families to live where they choose. "We want Lancaster to be one community where everyone is welcomed," he said.

Jasmine Torres (F) landed in foster care at age 12. Now a junior at USC who was awarded a Norman Topping Scholarship, she is a volunteer at Public Counsel putting what she has learned to work for other young people.

Public Counsel is the nation's largest *pro bono* law firm with a staff of 113 and the power of more than 5,000 volunteer attorneys, law students and other professionals. We deliver justice, hope and opportunity to children, families, veterans, nonprofits and small businesses through direct legal services, policy and legislation, and impact litigation in nine practice areas.

Dear Friends,

Can you imagine where we would be without our dreams for the future?

Unfortunately, too many people are blocked from pursuing their dreams by injustice, discrimination and poverty. Public Counsel uses the power of the law to open doors and change people's lives. Last year Public Counsel and our *pro bono* partners took bold action to deliver justice to people who need it most. For example:

We learned that 400,000 California students are suspended from school every year – more than graduate from high school. Public Counsel was a driving force behind five new state laws that will help keep students in school and learning.

We expanded our national *pro bono* footprint to assist veterans in more than 40 states and forged new partnerships with attorneys and law students in Southern California.

When President Obama announced a new program for young immigrants brought to the United States as children, we launched a clinic that has helped hundreds of young people called “Dreamers” to apply for and win the right to live and work here.

We opened our first Bay Area office, which will focus on work to guarantee the education rights of all California students.

And we took a major step toward ensuring all new families created through adoption and guardianship have the support they need to stay together and thrive through our new Families Forever Project.

Last year opened new vistas for how Public Counsel can make a difference in people's lives. Where will we go next? We believe that if we can do something to make a difference in a child's future or help people succeed, we should. As captured in the poem, “I Am One”: “I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And what I can do, I should do. And what I should do, by the grace of God I will do.”

With your continuing support, we will do more than ever. Thank you.



Hernán D. Vera
President and CEO

Robert F. Scoular
Chair, Board of Directors

EVERYONE HAS A DREAM.



What is your first memory of justice? For children like Marissa (above), it starts with a family's love. Public Counsel connected her with *pro bono* attorneys who finalized her adoption from foster care. Public Counsel helps more children, students, veterans, nonprofit leaders and people in need than anybody else. We do it with the support of the nation's largest law firms, corporate law departments, top universities and thousands of *pro bono* partners. Every day we help people write a new story in their lives – one that starts with justice, hope and opportunity.

OURS IS ABOUT JUSTICE.



Juana Aranda (above) lost her memories when she lost her home of more than 30 years in a foreclosure scam. She thought she would never again see the pretty little house and its garden of lilies that she sold on the street corner. But we didn't give up. *Pro bono* attorneys Dan Nabel and Rachel Wilkes Barchie of Greenberg Glusker took her case and uncovered the scam. Ms. Aranda got back her home and a cash payment to help repair it and replant her garden. "When you complete a case like this successfully, there's no better feeling as a lawyer," said Nabel.

EVERYONE GETS A CHANCE.



Childhood is supposed to be a time of discovery, but for children who lose their parents or suffer neglect or abuse, it's anything but. We helped Rocio Perez and Ruben Mendoza secure a legal guardianship for 8-year-old Valentina (above, at right), so she can grow up with her sister, Ilse, and not in the foster care system. Diana Lemaster and her partner, Joyce Vincent, took in Wyatt (opposite page, with his family and social worker) when his parents no longer would. *Pro bono* attorneys from Bingham McCutchen finalized the 10-year-old's adoption last year. "It means never getting taken away again," Wyatt said at his adoption day.

WE MAKE IT POSSIBLE.



While we can't erase the scars created by loss or abuse, we can start to paint a new picture. Our team of attorneys and social workers provides full-scope services to children who suffer from mental illness, developmental delays or trauma to make sure they can thrive. In 2013, we will launch the Everychild Foundation Families Forever Project, a new partnership with the Alliance for Children's Rights and Los Angeles Superior Court that is funded by a \$1 million grant. The project will make sure legal guardians and adoptive families have everything they need to be successful, not just at day one, but forever.

EVERYONE NEEDS HOPE.



Last year we helped more than 30,000 people fight injustice. We assisted the Cruces family to adopt young brothers Anthony and Dylan (A). Sergio and Lisbeth (B and F) were brought to the U.S. as young children and grew up as Americans. We helped them apply for the Deferred Action program that lets them live, work and pursue their futures without fear of deportation. We urged Los Angeles court and civic leaders to end \$1,000 fines for young people on their way to school and helped lead the way to a 14-0 City Council vote (C). Martin (D, with his uncle, mother and Public Counsel's Beth Tsoulos and Brian Capra) suffers a

WE DELIVER IT.



severe disability, and Public Counsel and the firm of Allen Matkins won an \$82,000 payment that helped his family buy a special van. The California Legislature adopted five new laws sponsored or supported by Public Counsel to fix problems with harsh student discipline rules (E). *TCAL v. Lancaster* plaintiffs Juan Blanco, V. Jesse Smith and Emmett Murrell with Lancaster Mayor Rex Parris (G) announced an agreement to guarantee that their city is open to black and Latino families who receive federal housing aid. Eddie Walker (H) lost his home in a fire, then he lost it again to fraud. We are helping him win it back.

2012 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Children's Rights



Fewer than half of young people in foster care graduate from high school. Public Counsel expanded our on-site clinics for teens in foster care to a second high school in South Los Angeles, to provide intensive advocacy and support to guide these youth towards graduation, college and career success.

Public Counsel provides education advocacy for youth at their delinquency court hearings through innovative partnerships – including a new pilot court for victims of commercial sexual exploitation. The experience led Public Counsel to co-sponsor SB 1088, to ensure California youth who have had contact with the juvenile justice system can return to a regular school and complete their education.

Public Counsel has entered into an innovative partnership with highly respected researchers at Cal State University Los Angeles to help implement our I.T. settlement agreement. These experts will analyze data, monitor outcomes for a sample of youth and provide on-site training and coaching in best practices to help the Los Angeles County Probation Department improve treatment and outcomes for youth with developmental disabilities in juvenile halls and under probation supervision.

Immigrants' Rights

Public Counsel helped win justice for Maria Aragon, an indigenous woman from Oaxaca who was defrauded of \$80,000 after she reported abuse by her husband. Because of our efforts, the man who defrauded her was arrested, a court ordered him to pay back the money he stole, and Maria can stay in the U.S. under the U-Visa program for crime victims. The story was featured on *Univision* and in the *Huffington Post*.



After President Obama announced the Deferred Action program for young people brought to the U.S. as children, we launched a clinic that has helped 500 students win the right to pursue their dreams of colleges and careers.

Public Counsel attorneys provide access to counsel for immigrants held in Orange County detention facilities who, but for our work, would have no ability to speak with immigration attorneys or otherwise learn about their rights. Public Counsel provided training on immigration law to over 1,000 detainees, and individual legal consultations to another 369 detainees. Our legal team secured release from custody and permanent legal status for approximately 20 transgender immigrants who have been persecuted or fear persecution on account of their transgender status.

Appellate Law

Michael Strub and Zachary Elsea of Irell & Manella LLP secured Janice Zhang's trial victory against Savoy Community Association. The Court of Appeal found that Savoy failed to provide reasonable accommodation for her physical disability. The appeal also affirmed that financial penalties that Savoy had levied against Ms. Zhang were improper and allowed her to pursue punitive damages.

A client of the Federal Pro Se Clinic recently settled her Title VII employment discrimination case alleging sexual harassment and race discrimination for \$75,000 with help over the course of a year from clinic volunteers and staff.

The Federal Pro Se Clinic moved to a new location and was profiled as a national model in a video produced by the Federal Judicial Center featuring District Judge A. Howard Matz, who told the *Daily Journal* that the Clinic is "a place where individuals can meet with experienced lawyers and get help navigating the very complex federal court system. We're doing it on a districtwide level, which is pretty incredible."

Consumer Law

Public Counsel went to court to expose patient dumping after Jesse Bravo, a man with a serious mental illness, was left wandering in South L.A. while his wife searched for him at the hospital. The story was featured in the *Los Angeles Times* and the lawsuit is ongoing.

Our Debtors Assistance Project continued its record of success for people filing for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy – with a 95% discharge rate for *pro se* filers who attended our clinic, compared to the 61% overall discharge rate for *pro se* filers in the Central District. As an example of how we help people, Landau Gottfried successfully defended a *pro se* debtor against a bad-faith adversary filing. The client will now get a fresh start without having a \$100,000 default judgment.

Community Development

Public Counsel, Katten Muchin Rosenman and Public Interest Law Project won a preliminary injunction on behalf of the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing to protect \$38 million in the City of Industry Funds, an affordable housing engine in Los Angeles County that has fueled the construction of 8,000 homes since the mid-1990s.

We represented the Southeast Asian Community Alliance to create a City of Los Angeles plan for transit-rich areas in Chinatown and Lincoln Heights that will spur economic growth but keep neighborhoods in reach of working families who are the heaviest users of public transit. Public Counsel also fostered inclusive development policies in two reports we released about the need for equitable transit development after dissolution of California's redevelopment agencies.

Public Counsel provides legal services to help neighborhood-based nonprofits and small businesses grow with their communities, and we were honored by the Coalition of Mental Health Professionals, a group formed in the wake of the Los Angeles riots to enhance the well being of the South Central community, and by Pacific Clinics, which offers mental healthcare and behavioral therapy for children, adolescents, adults, seniors and people who are homeless. "Public Counsel is privileged to partner with hundreds of safety net providers every year that provide critically-needed food, shelter and health care to people struggling with poverty in Los Angeles," said Shashi Hanuman, Directing Attorney of our Community Development Project.

Impact Litigation

Antelope Valley residents stood together with city leaders to announce the end of *The Community Action League v. Lancaster et al.*, a lawsuit over harassment of 3,600 families receiving federal housing vouchers. In just over a year, Public Counsel, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, and others won agreements with the County of Los Angeles and two cities that will protect families' rights and help the community heal.



California farm workers face sickness and even death working in the hot sun without adequate protection. Public Counsel and Munger, Tolles, and Olson filed *Bautista v. Cal/OSHA* on behalf of the United Farm Workers and individual farm workers. The lawsuit challenges the state's failure to enforce heat illness regulations that are meant to protect farm workers and builds on our 2009 lawsuit that first exposed the problem.

Center for Veterans Advancement

Public Counsel expanded our on-the-ground efforts for veterans with two legal offices in Hollywood and the Salvation Army Haven on the campus of the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center.



The Center for Veterans Advancement and National Organization of Veterans' Advocates recognized attorney Tara Goffney with their first *pro bono* award after she won more than \$100,000 for a veteran.

We launched a *pro bono* partnership with the Los Angeles County Bar Association to provide free legal assistance and representation to veterans on a range of legal matters.

2012 HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

Education Rights

400,000 California students are suspended every year, more than graduate from high school. Many suspensions are for minor behavioral issues. But because of harsh discipline policies, students wind up kicked out of school on an unsupervised vacation and learning all the wrong lessons. Public Counsel pushed for the passage of five new laws in 2012 that address the worst problems and created the website www.fixschooldiscipline.org to promote public education about the solutions.



Public Counsel tackled a major issue that contributes to the graduation crisis in Los Angeles schools: a rash of truancy tickets for students on their way to school that cost families up to \$1,000 per ticket. We worked with community groups and leaders to change the way police and courts approach students, and the City Council voted 14-0 to amend its daytime curfew law to get students back to school. "Students won't be put on the jailhouse track," Public Counsel's Laura Faer (above, with Children's Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash) told the Associated Press.

Early Care and Education

We conducted a series of legal trainings designed for 60 refugee women to help them start their own family child care small business.

Policymakers in the Southeast Cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Huntington Park, Maywood and South Gate received education and technical assistance from Public Counsel on how to best incorporate family friendly policies that promote access to child care.

Homelessness Prevention

The Shriver Housing Project launched in 2012 and has already assisted hundreds of people facing eviction and homelessness. The Shriver Housing Project is a collaborative of Public Counsel, Neighborhood Legal Services, Inner City Law Center and Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles that seeks to level the playing field and provide representation to poor tenants and landlords navigating the eviction process.

Public Counsel held two Homeless Court sessions, which help people like Jack Sampson. Through the program he has gotten a fresh start with a clean record. "This is the first time since I was 16 – I am now 55 – that I can remember not having probation, parole or anything open in the courts," he said. "So thank you very much for helping me along my way."

We stopped cuts to the General Relief program, which helps some of the poorest Angelenos. The *Los Angeles Times* profiled Public Counsel's efforts to protect and expand protections for people facing homelessness.

CALIFORNIA'S TOP LAWYERS WORK AT PUBLIC COUNSEL

Public Counsel's attorneys are experts in their fields, and the word is getting out. *The Daily Journal* named **President and CEO Hernán Vera** one of California's Top 100 lawyers. He was one of just a handful of public interest attorneys to make the list. "This award is a recognition of your fearlessness and activism," he told Public Counsel's staff.... **Senior staff attorney Kristen Jackson** was featured on the cover of *Los Angeles Lawyer* for her work to promote Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.... **Appellate Law Director Lisa Jaskol** was named in Super Lawyers' list of appellate specialists.... **Education Rights Director Laura Faer** was profiled in Super Lawyers Rising Stars.

PRO BONO PARTNERS

Public Counsel leverages the talents of more than 5,000 *pro bono* partners every year, including top lawyers from 40 states, in-house counsel from major corporations, students from 30 law schools, architects, and other professionals. “If you’re ready to put the power of law to work for people, there’s a place for you at Public Counsel,” said Pro Bono Director David Daniels.

Navy SEAL’s Dream of Helping Veterans Continues to Ripple



Jonas Kelsall was part of America’s military elite, a Navy SEAL who loved his job and the men and women he worked with. When he was killed in action in 2011, his parents, John and Teri, kept his dream of helping veterans alive. “He loved the military so much, and they all

experience such tremendous loss,” said Teri. They decided to found the Jonas Project, a nonprofit that would pair veterans who had an entrepreneurial dream with mentors and seed money. But first they needed some start-up help of their own. They turned to Public Counsel and Dykema, who reviewed their business plan and assisted with the nonprofit formation. “We helped John and Teri get their dream started, but know that they will use their experience to help other people’s dreams come true,” said Dykema associate Vivian Lee. Dykema’s *pro bono* requirement let Lee, a litigator, “put together a team of people I don’t usually work with,” including corporate attorneys Harvey Rosen and Julia Zhu, litigation attorney Walead Esmail and trademark attorney Shannon McKeon, and leverage her firm’s business and nonprofit experience. “We have a long way to go, but we’re going to get there,” Teri said. “It continues to ripple.”

CARES Helps Homeless and Makes Connections

USC law student Marlena McMurchie came to Public Counsel for a summer internship. Her experience with our Public Counsel CARES (Connecting Angelenos to Resources and Essential Services)

program reminded her “why I went to law school in the first place.” CARES is



a signature program that has matched *pro bono* volunteers with people in need for nearly 20 years. “Beyond providing legal services, arguably the most important part of what we do is to listen to these peoples’ stories, look them in the eye and tell them that they’re not alone,” she said. “It’s amazing going into the office and asking, ‘What can I help you with?’ and the way people open up to that.” Last year more than 40 law firms, businesses and law schools participated in CARES.

Adoption Attorneys Become Part of Families’ Lives

A child’s adoption from foster care should be a joyous occasion, but for the families involved it can be a “scary process,” said Amy Gantvoort, senior attorney and *pro bono* committee chair at Southern California Edison. “My favorite part is going and meeting with the family for the first time,” she said. “I get to know these families, and be a part of their family for a small time.” Southern California Edison pairs attorneys with other staff members to make sure everyone can participate not just in court but helping in other ways, such as translation for Spanish-speaking families. “If you want to be involved, I’ll put you on a team,” she said. “When I call for volunteers, I get them.” Last year she said Southern California Edison “upped its game,” adding a second adoption day at Children’s Court, when *pro bono* attorneys and families celebrate new beginnings. Gantvoort has assisted three families with their adoptions. “The only time I cry in court is on adoption day,” she said. “And I’ve cried three times.”

OUR EVENTS



Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel received Public Counsel's 2012 William O. Douglas Award. Past Board Chairperson David Johnson, with 2011-12 Chairperson Gail Migdal Title and President and CEO Hernán D. Vera (at top right) received the Founders Award. Marion Wiesel, actor William H. Macy and Professor Wiesel (center right). Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (bottom right).



Board members Roman Silberfeld, Dan Clivner and Dan Grunfeld caught up at our 2012 Board of Directors Retreat.



Teams participated in the Run for Justice at the Los Angeles Marathon.



2012-13 Board Chairperson Robert F. Scoular and Donna Scoular (left) and actor Mike Farrell and Shelley Fabares (right) enjoyed our Just Fashion event.

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Public Counsel's staff is 113-strong in nine legal practice areas. It includes 61 attorneys, five social workers, paralegals, intake specialists and volunteer coordinators. Our attorneys are national experts in child welfare, immigration, veterans' advocacy, special education, impact litigation and economic justice.

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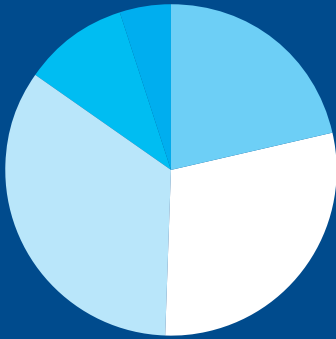
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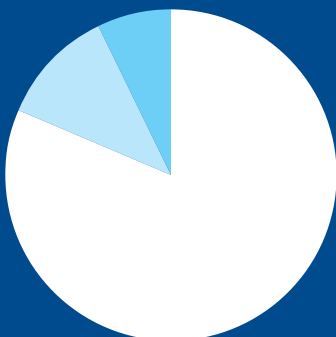
Public Counsel is a \$10.5-million organization with strong and balanced support from foundations, private donations, program fees and State Bar-administered funds.

2012 REVENUES



Grants	\$2,264,274	21.57%
Contributions	\$3,059,778	29.15%
Program Fees	\$3,585,924	34.16%
IOLTA/Equal Access	\$1,082,140	10.31%
Attorney Fees/Cy Pres	\$505,821	4.82%
TOTAL	\$10,497,937	

2012 EXPENSES



Program	\$7,922,764	81.55%
Fundraising	\$1,100,933	11.33%
Administration	\$691,690	7.12%
TOTAL	\$9,715,387	



Public Counsel received grants from the following organizations in 2012, in addition to our generous support from law firms, corporations and individuals:

American College of Bankruptcy
 Annenberg Foundation
 Atlantic Philanthropies
 Audrey Irmes Foundation for Social Justice
 Beverly Hills Bar Association
 Burton G. Bettingen Foundation
 California Bar Foundation
 California Community Foundation
 California Consumer Protection Foundation
 California Endowment
 California Wellness Foundation
 Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
 Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation
 Eisner Foundation
 Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation
 Families in Schools
 Ford Foundation
 Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of California
 John W. Carson Foundation
 Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation
 Kenny Nickelson Memorial Foundation for Homeless Veterans
 Land of the Free
 Los Angeles County Bar Association
 MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
 Proskauer
 Ray and Wyn Ritchie Evans Foundation
 S. Mark Taper Foundation
 State Bar of California Legal Services Trust Fund
 Stuart Foundation
 United Way of Greater Los Angeles
 W. M. Keck Foundation
 Walter & Elise Haas Fund
 Weingart Foundation

LOOKING AHEAD



Rosie is just 17, but she's got a giant smile and a presence that's years ahead. Her mother died when she was 13 and the bottom fell out of her life when she landed in foster care. Now she has a new motto: "Never give up and always strive to do what you want to do in your life."

Young people who wind up in foster care through no fault of their own face long odds against attending college or even graduating from high school. Just 3% of former foster youth will attend a four-year college. Public Counsel provides one-on-one advocacy to foster youth with lawyer-social worker teams at two Los Angeles high schools and other programs. We ensure foster youth can make informed choices about their futures and that they understand complex laws like California's AB 12 that allow young people leaving the child welfare system to stay connected and have a better chance at success.

Public Counsel doesn't give up on anybody, no matter how long the odds.



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