

# Impact Report 2017

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## Who We Are

Brooklyn A's mission is to **advance social and economic justice and empower communities** through innovative, collaborative, **high-quality neighborhood-based legal representation and advocacy.**

## What We Do

**Consumer & Economic Advocacy:** The program has three primary focus areas—Foreclosure Defense, Anti-Predatory Lending, and a Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic. We represent consumers victimized by fraudulent, abusive, and predatory business practices, as well as lower-income and other vulnerable homeowners in foreclosure proceedings in state and federal court litigation to challenge predatory lending, abusive mortgage servicing, and other fair housing and lending violations.

Our **Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic** provides individual representation and advice to low-income families every year. Our advocates represent taxpayers during audits, appeals, and in tax court. We engage in outreach and hold educational workshops to make sure low-income families are aware of the Earned Income Tax Credit and any other credits or benefits to which they are entitled. For many working families, these are lifesaving cash infusions that can be used to pay for shelter, food, clothes, and education expenses.

### Community & Economic Development:

We provide in-house and special project counsel—which encompasses a full range of legal services—to community based organizations (CBOs) and community development corporations (CDCs). This counsel includes transactional legal services to start-up CBOs and NYCHA Resident Associations (RAs). In providing these organizations with high-quality legal services, we enable them to focus their resources on delivering essential services to our shared communities. These projects result in meaningful, sustainable community development through the creation and preservation of affordable housing; the expansion of affordable, high-quality community based health care services; the growth of child care and youth services; the expansion of food pantry services; the creation of jobs; and the stability and growth of small businesses and non-profit organizations.

**Preserving Affordable Housing:** This program aggressively fights to prevent evictions, preserve affordable housing, and ensure that apartments are safe. We provide legal services for individuals and tenant associations, including advice, advocacy, and aggressive litigation, to prevent evictions, both in court and administrative proceedings; obtain needed repairs in apartments and buildings; obtain benefits to pay rent arrears and future rent; and fight to reduce illegally high rents. We form and represent tenant groups through organizing, litigation and in-house legal counsel activities in partnership with CBOs. Through our model of affirmative group representation, we work to preserve the affordability of the building as a whole, for our clients and future generations.

2017 | A YEAR OF IMPACT



Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

### Consumer & Economic Advocacy Program

**12,374** impacted

### Community & Economic Development Program

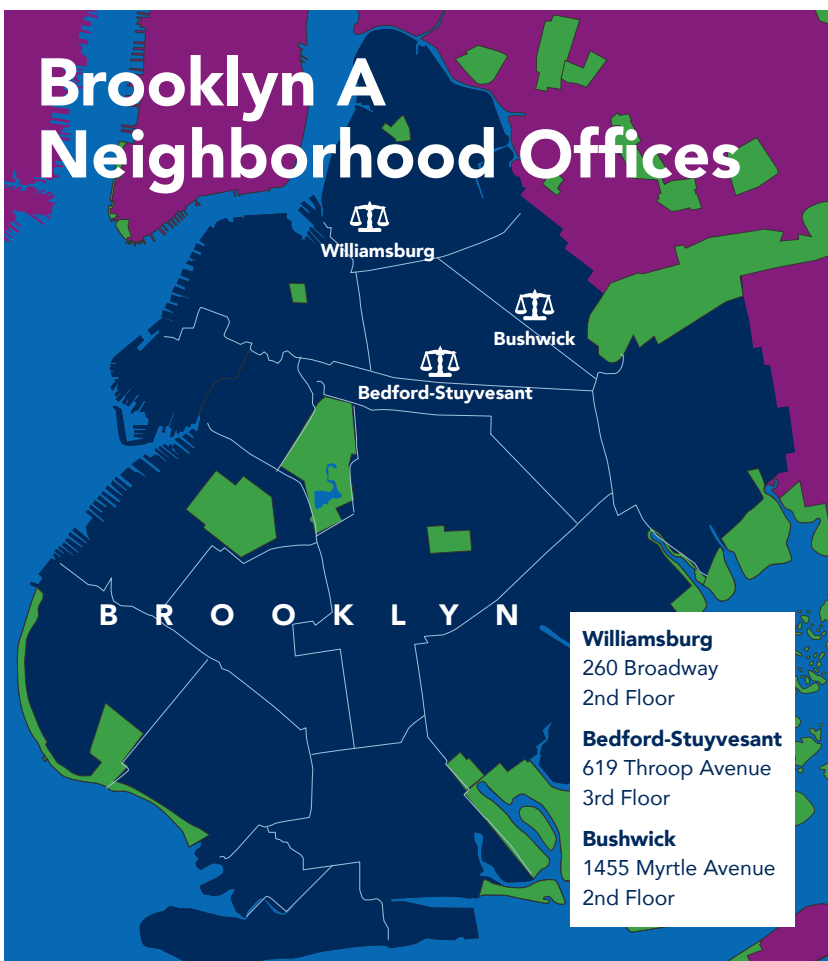
**244,495** impacted

### Preserving Affordable Housing Program

**44,410** impacted

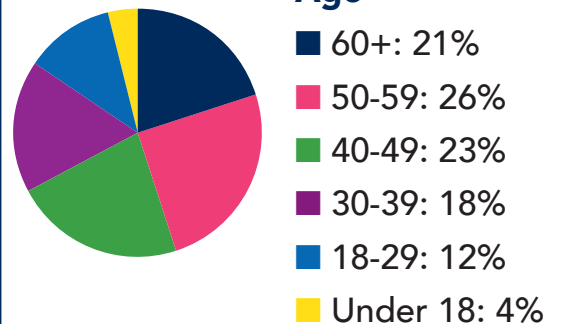
In 2017,  
Brooklyn A  
impacted the  
lives of over  
**300,000**  
New Yorkers.

## Brooklyn A Neighborhood Offices

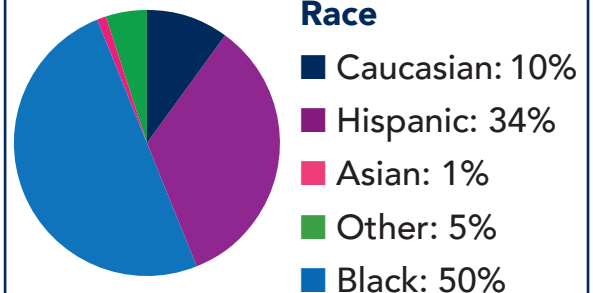


## Client Demographics

### Age



### Race



2017 | A YEAR OF IMPACT



Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

## Consumer & Economic Advocacy Program

In 2017, we represented **265** homeowners facing foreclosure. The Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic resolved **109** tax conflicts. We reached an additional **12,000** people through outreach efforts including presentations and trainings on numerous topics, such as racial discrimination in mortgage loan originations and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

“Tax issues can be a serious barrier to prosperity. Our program educates people on their rights and helps our clients to exercise them. When people know their options, they can push past obstacles and on to new opportunities.”

— TAMARA DEL CARMEN,  
*Deputy Director, Consumer & Economic Advocacy Program*

### A Client Focus:

Gerald came to Brooklyn A owing close to \$33,000 in federal taxes and \$10,000 in New York State taxes. He only receives social security income in the amount of \$1,801. Gerald had been relentlessly trying to find a new job without success. He wanted to apply for a commercial driver's license to become a truck driver but received a notice from NYS stating that his driver's license was going to be suspended due to the taxes owed. The IRS also sent a Notice of Levy and Intent to Collect. Brooklyn A aggressively represented the taxpayer, and a hold was placed on the driver's license suspension. We also placed Gerald in currently non-collectible status with the IRS taxpayer due to his financial circumstances. BKA submitted Offers in Compromises to the IRS and NYS. The IRS accepted an offer of \$1 to settle all of the tax debts and NYS accepted \$200. Gerald is currently working as a truck driver and is improving his financial situation each day.



2017 | A YEAR OF IMPACT



Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

## Community & Economic Development Program

In 2017, we represented **51** non-profit clients on **63** development and operation projects, which impacted the lives of **242,224** individuals and families. Our trainings and presentations reached an additional **2,220** people.

“Growing up, I relied on community health centers like UHP and personally know the positive impact it has on the lives of communities too used to having their health problems ignored or under-treated, and for whom affordable, culturally sensitive healthcare is out of reach without these kinds of facilities.”

— MEAH CLAY, Senior Staff Attorney, Community & Economic Development Program

### A Client Focus:

In September, the CED Program closed on a \$5.82M renovation/expansion project for our long-term client, Urban Health Plan, Inc. (UHP). Through this expansion, UHP can renovate, develop and improve a portion of an existing two-story medical/retail building. Located at 866 East Tremont Avenue, the building will be expanded into a 7,400 sf space offering 10 new examination rooms, space for routine primary care, mammography, optometry, podiatry and mental health services.





2017 | A YEAR OF IMPACT



Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

## Preserving Affordable Housing Program

In 2017, the Program prevented **766** evictions, which enabled **1,910** lower-income members of the community stay in their homes. Our group housing unit represented **98** tenant associations in rent-stabilized housing and handled **415** housing-related state and federal court proceedings. Our Community Legal Education efforts impacted over **42,000** individuals and families.

“Universal access has changed the game for tenants in housing court in that they can now have the upper hand in saving their affordable housing. BKA has been listed as one of the providers under the Mayor’s initiative representing tenants and protecting one of the most crucial rights in their lives.”

— KRISTIE ORTIZ, Deputy Director,  
Preserving Affordable Housing Program,  
Individual Representation Unit

### A Client Focus:

In December, the Broadway Triangle Community Coalition (BTCC) celebrated the culmination of nearly a decade of litigation and community activism when it reached a landmark settlement agreement with the City of New York.

The agreement brings nearly 400 units of permanent, truly affordable housing to Brooklyn, as well as fair housing services aimed at educating and representing at-risk residents. This precedent-setting case confirmed that the City of New York “cannot plan without input from the community.” BTCC was represented by Brooklyn A attorneys, along with counsel from Emery Celli Brinkerhoff & Abady and the New York Civil Liberties Union.



**2017 | A YEAR OF  
CELEBRATION**



**Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A**

# Annual Partnership Awards Benefit

**November 2, 2017 at  
Weylin B. Seymours in  
Williamsburg, Brooklyn**

JUDGE HAROLD R. TYLER JR. AWARD

**Jerry Goldfeder**

*Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP*

DENIS BERGER AWARD

**Neil Steinkamp**

*Managing Director  
Stout*

SARGENT SHRIVER AWARD

**Juan Ramos**

*Executive Director  
Southside United HDFC-Los Sures*

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

**Errol Louis**

*Daily News  
CNN  
NY1*



**“What makes Brooklyn A unique is we are a model for working with community organizations—collaborating with them, representing them, supporting them substantively. We don’t define the agenda. We never define the priorities. The priorities come out of being a part of the community.”**

**— MARTY NEEDELMAN, Executive Director & Chief Counsel**

To learn how you can support Brooklyn A please contact our Development Office at (718) 487-2305 or visit [bka.org](http://bka.org).