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# Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A Impact Report 2022





**Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A (Brooklyn A) advances social and economic justice and community empowerment through innovative, collaborative, neighborhood-based legal representation and advocacy.**

Established in 1968 as part of the War on Poverty, Brooklyn A believes attorneys have a critical role to play in combatting poverty, inequity and racism. Our civil legal services, organizing efforts and educational resources assist our clients and communities in defending and mobilizing against harassment, displacement and gentrification and asserting their rights.



**Through legal representation, advice, education and advocacy, Brooklyn A:**

- Prevents evictions and ensures safe and healthy living conditions for tenants and tenant associations
- Assists taxpayers with federal and state tax issues
- Challenges predatory lending practices, defends homeowners against foreclosure of their homes and manages bankruptcies and loan modifications
- Advocates for small businesses in commercial lease matters
- Supports community and economic development efforts undertaken by nonprofit, neighborhood-based organizations

# 2022 By the Numbers

5,955

Cases

8,216

New Yorkers served

334

Families preserved homeownership

294

Tax issues resolved for low-income households

1,835

Cases providing lease and contract assistance serving 694 small businesses

2,847

Defended tenants against eviction or unsafe housing conditions

54

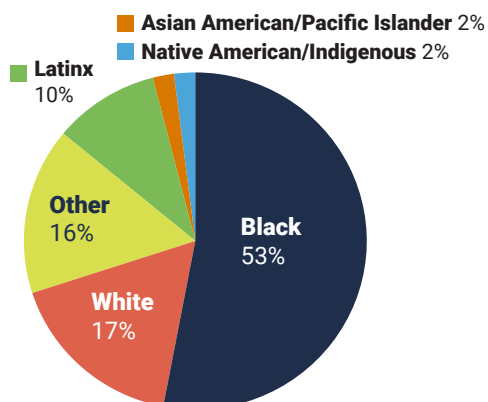
Tenant associations organized and supported

117

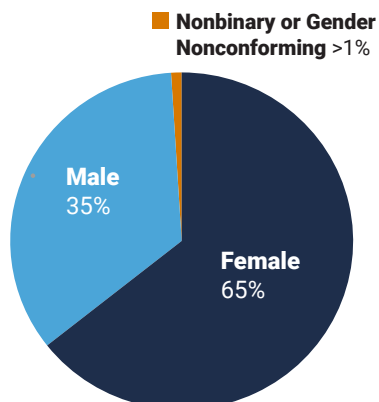
Survivors of domestic violence aided

## Who We Serve

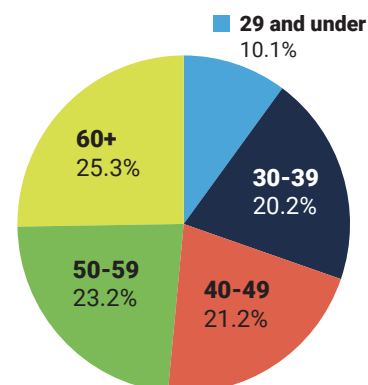
Race and Ethnicity



Gender



Age



# Outreach and Education

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Brooklyn A shifted a large part of its outreach and educational activities to a virtual platform. This shift resulted in significant expansion of educational and outreach activities for the communities we serve. **In 2022, Brooklyn A staff participated in 58 virtual events reaching approximately 4,300 individuals.** Through these events, we educated clients and community partners on rights and options during this time of rapid change and beyond. We're grateful to all our partners who helped us provide critical information at a time of major change.

100 Suits for 100 Men  
Accompany Capital  
Antioch Development Corporation  
Arcturus Community Endeavors (ACE)  
Asian American Federation  
Association for Neighborhood  
& Housing Development  
Benefits Plus Learning Center  
Brooklyn Community Board 5  
Catholic Charities of NY  
Center for NYC Neighborhoods  
Chhaya  
Church Avenue BID  
Churches Alliance  
Citizens Bank  
Coalition for Community Advancement  
Cypress Hills Local  
Development Corporation  
Flatbush Avenue BID  
Fort Greene Community Fridge  
Good Shepherd Services  
JASA Legal Services for Elder Justice  
Legal Aid Society  
LIFE Camp, Inc  
Metropolitan Black Bar Association  
NAACP  
Neighborhood Trust Financial Partners  
NHS Brooklyn  
NHS of Jamaica  
NHS of Queens  
North Brooklyn YMCA  
NYC Council Member Crystal Hudson

NYC Council Member Julie Menin  
NYC Council Member Lincoln Restler  
NYC Council Member Marjorie Velazquez  
NYC Council Member Nantasha Williams  
NYC Council Member Rita Joseph  
NYC Council Member Sandy Nurse  
NYC Department of Finance  
NYC Department of Housing  
Preservation and Development  
NYC Department of Small Business Services  
NYC Health + Hospitals  
NYC Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants  
NYS Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman  
NYS Attorney General's Office  
NYS Senator Julia Salazar  
NYS Senator Leroy Comrie  
NYS Senator Roxanne Persaud  
Oneness Pentecostal Church  
Queens Protect Our Homes Coalition  
Southern Boulevard Merchant Association  
St Nicks Alliance  
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce  
Staten Island Justice Center  
TakeRoot Justice  
U.S. Representative Hakeem Jeffries  
United for Small Business NYC  
University Settlement  
Volunteers of Legal Service  
Washington Heights & Inwood  
Development Corporation  
WHEDco  
Yemeni American Merchants Association



# Consumer & Economic Advocacy

## Protecting Homeownership



### Tracey

Jamaica, Queens

The **Consumer & Economic Advocacy (CEA)** program represents and advocates on behalf of underrepresented, low-income consumers to protect economic equity and assert their rights in the marketplace. We prevent foreclosures, defend against predatory lending and strive to ensure that vulnerable groups have strong safeguards in place to help them build and maintain assets throughout their financial lives.

We prevent foreclosures and protect home equity for individuals like Tracey in Jamaica, Queens. Tracey lives in her childhood home with her daughter and granddaughter. She was referred to Brooklyn A when the home went into foreclosure after disputes with the mortgage company on ownership and loan payment while Tracey faced a life-threatening accident that took her away from her work at a hospital. Brooklyn A was able to help Tracey reach an agreement with her mortgage lender with affordable mortgage payments and established Tracey as the estate executive to keep the home in her family for generations to come.

### COVID-19 Impact

Many low-income and BIPOC homeowners in New York City lost income or had unexpected costs because of the pandemic. In 2022, homeowners in New York's predominately Black neighborhoods were four times as likely to be in mortgage distress than homeowners in the city's majority-white ZIP codes. The pandemic represents an acute new threat to homeownership in BIPOC communities that already have endured decades of predatory lending and racist practices in housing. Brooklyn A continues our commitment to protecting BIPOC homeownership through legal services as well as education about aggressive scams and deed thefts, and has helped homeowners access funding made available from the federal Homeowner Assistance Program in response to COVID-19.

# Consumer & Economic Advocacy

## Taxpayer Advocacy



### Venantius and Cecelia

Washington Heights,  
Manhattan



**Brooklyn A's Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic** offers legal services and education to income-eligible taxpayers in tax disputes with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, and help low-income and "English-as-a-second-language" taxpayers exercise their rights.

Legal assistance from Brooklyn A can make all the difference in resolving tax issues, like it did for our clients Venantius and Cecilia in Washington Heights, Manhattan. The married couple met many years ago in India, their country of origin, and Venantius lives in their Washington Heights apartment while Cecilia is staying in a long-term care facility as she is treated for cancer. They came to Brooklyn A's Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic with tax liabilities to New York State due to the complications of filing as entrepreneurs and dealing with worsening medical conditions. Over multiple tax years, we helped them settle their debts and receive the refunds they were owed.

### COVID-19 Impact

The pandemic has taken an especially painful toll on lower-income communities where many people were already living paycheck to paycheck before the disruption and strain of the past few years. Many of our most vulnerable clients faced the greatest hurdles in securing their federal stimulus checks. The primary mechanism the government uses to send stimulus funding is through tax filing information—which means that New Yorkers who are low-income, homeless, lacking banking services or identification documents, or are survivors of domestic violence face steep challenges in accessing relief. Brooklyn A worked hard to assure taxpayers could access economic stimulus payments and child tax credits made available during the pandemic, and to make sure all clients can access the benefits they deserve.

# Community & Economic Development

## Supporting Small Businesses and Neighborhoods



**Yosara**

South Bronx, The Bronx

The **Community & Economic Development (CED)** program provides transactional legal counsel to small businesses and nonprofits that sustain and empower low-income communities throughout New York City. Brooklyn A works in partnership with the city's Department of Small Business Services to provide legal support through the Commercial Lease Assistance Program, which helps businesses in all five boroughs negotiate lease matters and rent arrears to stay open for their communities.

These services are a lifeline for small business owners like Yosara, owner of Sweet Water Dance & Yoga in the South Bronx, which she opened to provide an accessible wellness option to her community. Brooklyn A helps small businesses owners negotiate commercial lease matters to keep businesses open and thriving in the communities that rely on them.

### **COVID-19 Impact**

In the first two years of the pandemic, at least 26,000 businesses closed in New York City. Most were very small businesses with fewer than 10 employees, and Black-owned businesses were twice as likely to close. In addition to addressing business needs related to lease negotiations and decisions, Brooklyn A helped more than 100 businesses access pandemic-related grant assistance and use those funds to resolve rent arrears and other debts that resulted from business losses as a result of the pandemic, achieving relief of more than \$4.2 M in rent arrears for New York City small businesses.

# Preserving Affordable Housing

## Tenant Support and Organizing



**Dana**

Flatbush, Brooklyn

The **Preserving Affordable Housing (PAH)** program uses legal and advocacy strategies to preserve and protect affordable housing, prevent evictions, combat tenant harassment and discrimination, and ensure tenants have access to safe and sanitary housing.

This work prevents the displacement of long-term tenants like Dana, who lived with her Aunt Sheila in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Brooklyn after she immigrated from Trinidad and Tobago. She came to Brooklyn A when the building owner tried to evict her from the apartment after her aunt's death. Brooklyn A helped Dana prove the emotional and financial commitment and interdependence she shared with her aunt, allowing Dana to succeed Sheila's tenancy and preserve both her affordable family apartment and her place in the community she calls home.

### **COVID-19 Impact**

BIPOC communities have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 illness and many New York City residents lost income from pandemic shutdowns and business closures, making rent payments a hardship for many. Brooklyn A attorneys assisted clients with rental arrears to apply for support from the pandemic Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Since the pandemic moratorium on residential evictions expired in early 2022, the demand for our eviction prevention services is higher than ever.



# FY2022 Financial Summary

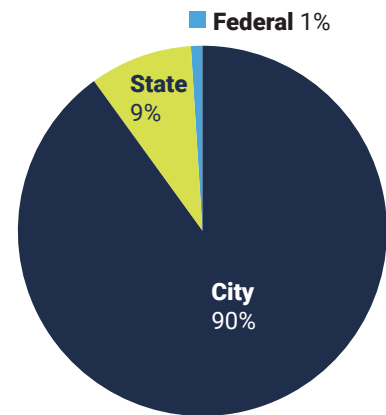
## Revenue and Support

Government Contracts & Grants	\$10,513,404
Contributions	\$542,198
Special Events	\$97,010
Program Fees	\$152,950
Other Income	\$568,766
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>\$11,874,328</b>

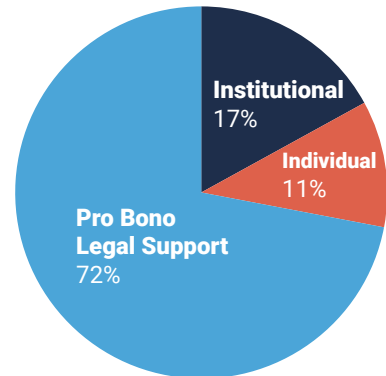
## Expenses

Program Services	\$9,042,857
Supporting	\$2,649,345
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$11,692,202</b>
Change in Net Assets	(\$182,126)

## Government Contracts & Grants



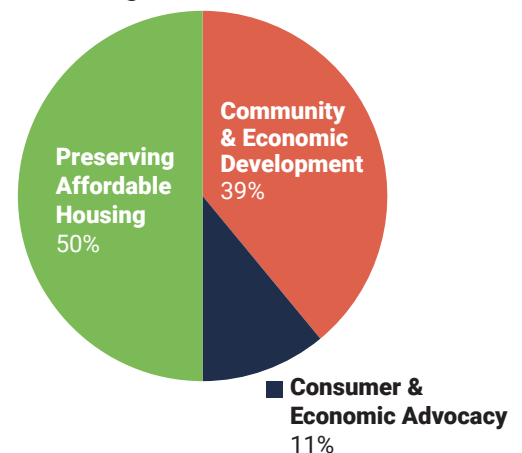
## Contributions



## Where Our Money Goes



## Program Services



# We Are Brooklyn A.



For services or more information,  
contact [info@bka.org](mailto:info@bka.org) or 718-487-2300.

 Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

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[bka.org](http://bka.org)

