

IMPACT REPORT 2023



Brooklyn
Legal
Services
Corporation A

**BUILDING COMMUNITIES
ENSURING OPPORTUNITY
ACHIEVING JUSTICE**

Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A (Brooklyn A) believes all New Yorkers should have equal access to legal services to seek justice, make their voices heard, and overcome systemic racism and oppression. 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 their communities in asserting their rights and defending and mobilizing against harassment, displacement and gentrification.



PHOTO: BROOKLYN, 1974 DOCUMENTICA, DANNY LYON/U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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

- prevents evictions and ensures safe and healthy living conditions for tenants,
- assists taxpayers with federal or state tax conflicts,
- defends homeowners against foreclosure of their homes, including representing them in bankruptcies and loan modifications, and challenges predatory lending practices,
- assists survivors of domestic violence in establishing safety and stability,
- represents small businesses negotiating commercial lease matters,
- supports nonprofit institutions that are essential to local communities, representing community groups and non-profits, worker-owned cooperatives and solidarity economy projects, and community activist groups.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

Served **9,182**
people across NYC

Provided assistance on
1,334
small business matters

Defended **3,368**
tenants against evictions or
unsafe housing conditions

Supported **54**
tenant associations
organizing their buildings

Defended **382**
homeowners from
foreclosure

Resolved tax conflicts for
295 households

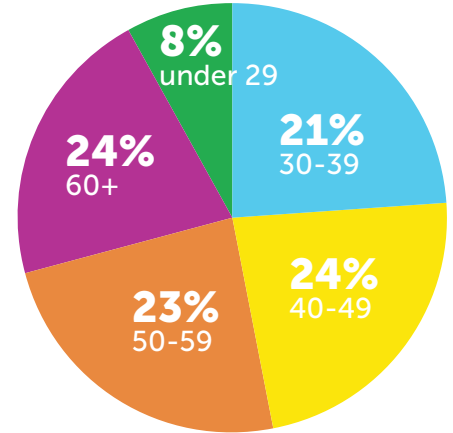
Served **278**
survivors of domestic
violence across programs

WHO WE SERVE

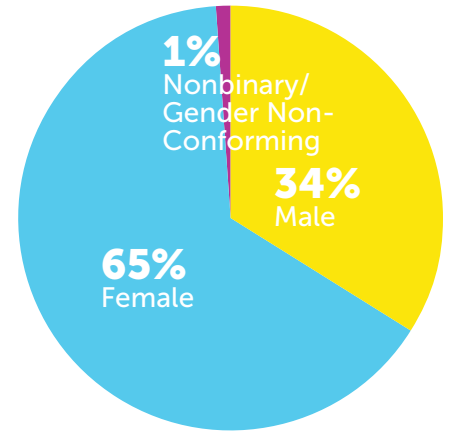
Client Language

English	4,896
Spanish	353
Chinese/Mandarin.....	36
Russian.....	23
Creole - Other	15
Bengali	14
Korean	9
Arabic.....	7
French.....	7
Japanese	6
French Creole	6
Nepali.....	5
Chinese/Cantonese.....	3
Urdu	3
Albanian.....	3
Polish	3
Greek.....	3
Hebrew.....	3
Turkish.....	2
Uyghur.....	1
Croatian.....	1
Other.....	1
American Sign Language.....	1
Finnish.....	1
Georgian	1
Hungarian	1
Yoruba.....	1
Armenian.....	1
Tagalog.....	1

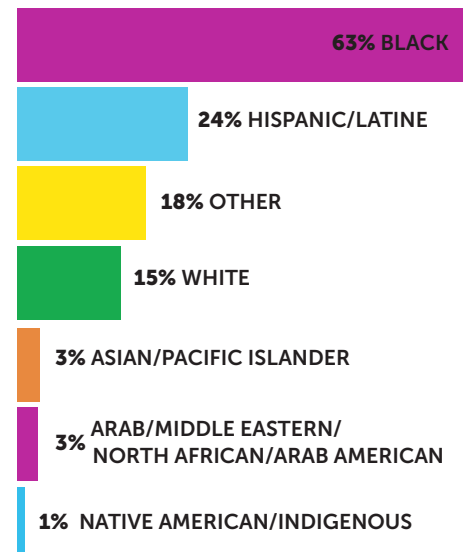
Age



Client Gender



Client Race & Ethnicity



OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Through Brooklyn A's virtual and in-person outreach, we participated in and hosted 58 educational and outreach events that reached approximately 2,600 people. We're grateful to all the organizations we partnered and worked closely with over the last year.

Community-Based Organizations

Accompany Capital
Asian American Federation
Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
Brooklyn Emerge
Brooklyn Packers
Brownsville Community Development Corporation
CAMBA
Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
The Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions
Central Brooklyn Economic Development Corp
Chhaya CDC
Coalition for the Homeless
Collective Focus Resource Hub
Cooper Square Committee

Corona Plaza Street Vendor Association
Cypress Hills Child Care Corp
Cypress Hills Local Development Corp
East Brooklyn Call to Action
El Puente
Fifth Avenue Committee
Flatbush Gardens Tenant Association
Good Shepherd Services
Grow Brooklyn
IMPACCT Brooklyn
JASA/Legal Services for Elder Justice
Jerome Avenue Revitalization Collaborative
Kingsbridge Road Merchants Association
MHANY Management
Neighborhood Housing Services of Brooklyn
Neighborhood Housing Services of Jamaica
Neighborhood Housing Services of Queens
Northfield Community LDC of Staten Island

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
New York Communities for Change
Queens Chamber of Commerce
REMA4US
RiseBoro Community Partnership
St. Nicks Alliance
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
Staten Island Urban Center
Sunset Park Business Improvement District
The Laundromat Project
Undocumented Women's Fund
United Community Centers
United People's Plaza
University Settlement
Washington Heights and Inwood Development Corporation
WHEDco
Yemeni American Merchants Association
YMCA New Americans Initiative

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION CONT.

Brooklyn A thanks our elected partners who collaborated with us this year by sponsoring community outreach and education:

Assemblymember
Alicia Hyndman

Assemblymember
Brian Cunningham

Assemblymember
Latrice Walker

Assemblymember
Phara Souffrant Forrest

Bronx Deputy Borough
President Janet A. Peguero

Congresswoman
Nydia Velázquez

Council Member
Alexa Avilés

Council Member
Charles Barron

Council Member
Crystal Hudson

Council Member
Farah Louis

Council Member
Jennifer Gutiérrez

Council Member
Marjorie Velázquez

Council Member
Nantasha Williams

Council Member
Pierina Ana Sanchez

Council Member
Rita Joseph

Council Member
Sandy Nurse

Senator Julia Salazar

Senator Roxanne Persaud



CONSUMER & ECONOMIC ADVOCACY (CEA)

PROTECTING HOMEOWNERSHIP



“It creates a sense of stability for my girls, and I want them growing up having stability.”

—KENISHA, 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. We prevent foreclosures, defend against predatory lending, and help marginalized households put strong safeguards in place to protect and maintain assets, including their homes.

Kenisha moved from the island of Jamaica to Jamaica, Queens. She works as a behavioral health specialist at a hospital, but fell behind on her mortgage payments after a partial paralysis in her leg made her temporarily unable to work. Kenisha connected with Brooklyn A and worked diligently with our team to stop her home from being foreclosed on. She recovered and returned to work, and her dream of passing the home to her daughters is still alive.

CONSUMER & ECONOMIC ADVOCACY (CEA)

TAXPAYER ADVOCACY

“Now that I don’t have the debt, I feel happy, free and grateful. Now my goal is to open my own business.”

—ROSALBA, JAMAICA, QUEENS



Originally from Mexico, Rosalba was in the process of stabilizing her immigration status when she learned that she had over \$21,000 in tax debt. New to the United States, she had not understood how the federal tax requirements applied to her work as a part-time baker. She reached out for assistance and Brooklyn A negotiated an Offer in Compromise with the IRS that resulted in a settlement of the debt for \$1. The resolution lifted a large burden off Rosalba and her two children. Rosalba now dreams of opening a bakery

The Consumer & Economic Advocacy (CEA) Program’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 helps low-income and English-as-second-language taxpayers exercise their rights.

CONSUMER & ECONOMIC ADVOCACY (CEA)

ADVOCATING FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Domestic Violence (DV) Program provides legal and social services to individuals who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. Our team, comprised of attorneys and social workers, assists clients with various issues commonly encountered in family court proceedings. We strive to equip clients with the information and resources to secure housing, counseling, social services, and more. Our social workers also provide clients with emotional support and accompany clients to family court when needed.

“K” is an immigrant from Bangladesh who came to the United States after her marriage at age 17. Her husband and his family restricted her movements and kept her from leaving the house on her own while forcing her to do housework inside, even repeatedly threatening her life if she attempted to leave. After living in this situation for years, she became pregnant with her precious daughter and bravely escaped to call the police for help.

Brooklyn A provided an array of services to support K during this hardship. We provided legal assistance for an order of protection in K’s case, filing for a divorce from the abuser, and filing a child support petition through family court. We also provided emotional support services and safety planning, and helped K and her daughter relocate to transitional shelter following an order of protection against her husband. Despite the abuse that she faced, she is focused on giving her young daughter a brighter future.

PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

TENANT SUPPORT AND ORGANIZING



The Preserving Affordable Housing Program uses legal representation, brief advice/services, and legal education and advocacy strategies to preserve and protect affordable housing, prevent eviction, combat tenant harassment and discrimination, and ensure that tenants in Brooklyn enjoy the right to safe and sanitary housing. In addition to individual representation, Brooklyn A organizes tenants to leverage the strength of numbers to unite and take action.

Last year, we worked with Coney Island public housing tenants who had no cooking gas for more than a year. Brooklyn A filed a lawsuit against NYCHA after residents and local elected officials laid the groundwork through months of advocacy and organizing. In February 2023, we celebrated the restoration of gas to all of the apartments in seven buildings. Additionally, tenants listed in the original suit received an abatement of 25% for 11 months of their rent. We continued work with the buildings beyond the suit to ensure the completion of repairs and the provision of an additional abatement to tenants who were added to the case after its filing.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES AND NEIGHBORHOODS



“When we moved to New York, we wanted to bring Ethiopian hospitality and coffee culture with us.”

– SARINA AND ELIAS, WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, MANHATTAN

The Community & Economic Development (CED) Program provides transactional legal counsel to small businesses and non-profits 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 so they can stay open for their communities. The CED team also works with non-profits, worker co-ops, and other advocacy organizations, helping bolster their legal and structural foundation so they’ll be able to focus on making change across the city.

Sarina and Elias own Buunni Coffee, cafés and a coffee line inspired by the love of coffee they bonded over when they met in Ethiopia. They were in midst of an ambitious business expansion when the pandemic hit—putting their new locations at risk. They worked with Brooklyn A attorneys to renegotiate the leases for three of their locations in Washington Heights and Inwood to be more sustainable, and to terminate the lease of their Bronx location on the best terms possible.

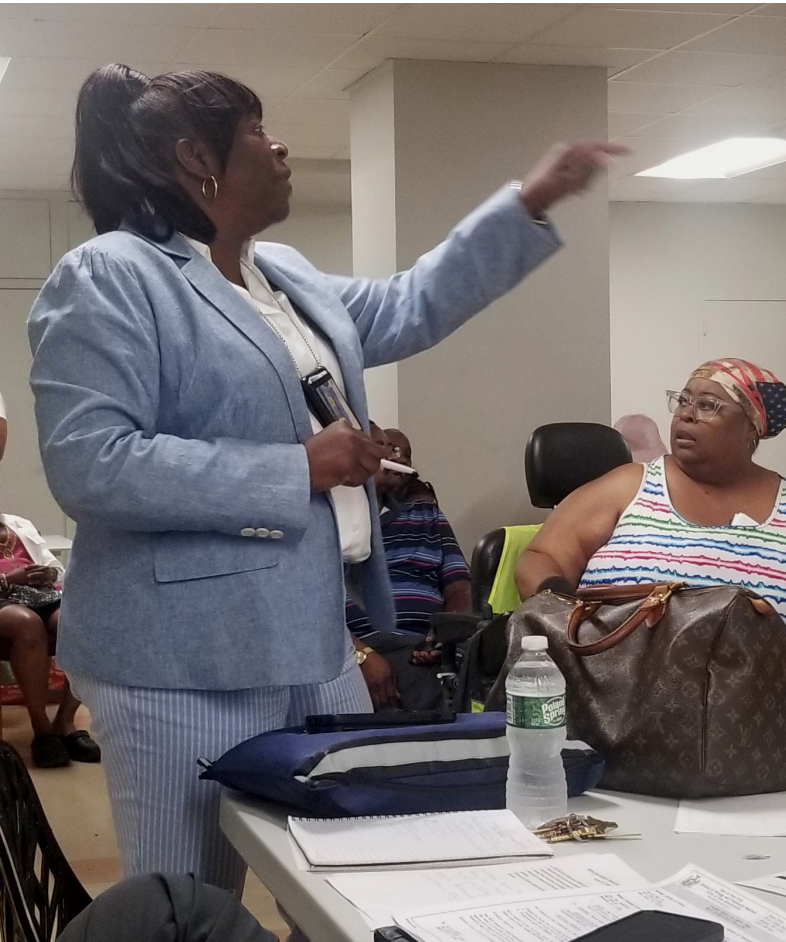
ANNUAL EVENT



On a beautiful spring evening in April 2023, we gathered to celebrate five of our clients at our annual event. Some of their stories are featured in this report. The strength, vision, and resilience of our clients shined through in a panel discussion moderated by Errol Louis of NY1. Brooklyn A partnered with these clients to get justice on a range of issues, from protecting their family from homelessness to defending intergenerational wealth, from relieving debilitating tax and mortgage debt, to sustaining a culturally relevant small business through a pandemic. This snapshot of Brooklyn A's work emphasized our city-wide advocacy – with client honorees from Canarsie, Brooklyn; Washington Heights, Manhattan; and Jamaica, Queens.

Another common thread through the event program was the sense of teamwork—amongst Brooklyn A staff and clients working together on their cases, as well as with elected officials and partner organizations who connect us to constituents that need our services. We heard from several clients that getting help from Brooklyn A made them realize that they are not alone.

ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS



Brooklyn A monitors the policies and legislation that impact our work and the communities we serve.

As part of this work, we produce valuable resources for the Brooklyn A community and the general public to better understand the complex issues the city and state face and the work we undertake to improve justice for all New Yorkers, sharing info and analysis through blog posts for our website and in

media, developing and holding educational events, and conducting outreach on policy matters.

In the last year, our blog has covered topics such as the changing foreclosure landscape, updates to housing law across the city and state, and the new rules for cannabis dispensary owners. We also created guides for taxpayers and domestic violence survivors, renters looking to

form a tenant association, and people seeking money judgements in housing court.

Our team expands the potential for Brooklyn A to be a voice for change in New York City policy. With so many brilliant legal minds on the staff, we're able to quickly respond to developments that impact our clients and the communities we serve. You can read all our latest and previous posts on bka.org under the "Learn More".

POLICY BLOG

Brooklyn A staff always stay on top of the latest news and legislation in the city and state that could impact our clients or our work. Here are some highlights from blog posts written by Brooklyn A team members in the last year:



“ Elected officials at the city and state level have made housing their top priority in the most recent legislative sessions and finalized budgets. While the state budget did include additional funding for emergency rental assistance, the Governor’s housing plan did not include many aspects of what affordable housing advocates have urged.”

“Even after leaving a commercial space, landlords can often still hold a former tenant responsible for paying their arrears unless there is a clause protecting the tenant in the lease or a vacate and surrender agreement is made.”



“Sadly, domestic violence not only serves as a pervasive threat but is also a leading cause of homelessness for families entering the NYC shelter system. It’s disheartening to note that survivors often encounter housing discrimination, ranging from being denied housing admission to facing the looming threat of eviction, all as a result of acts of violence committed against them.”

FY 2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

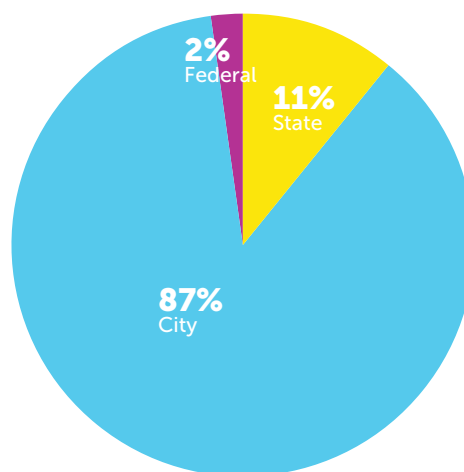


WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

Program services	87%
Management & General Admin	12%
Fundraising	1%



GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS & GRANTS



REVENUE AND SUPPORT

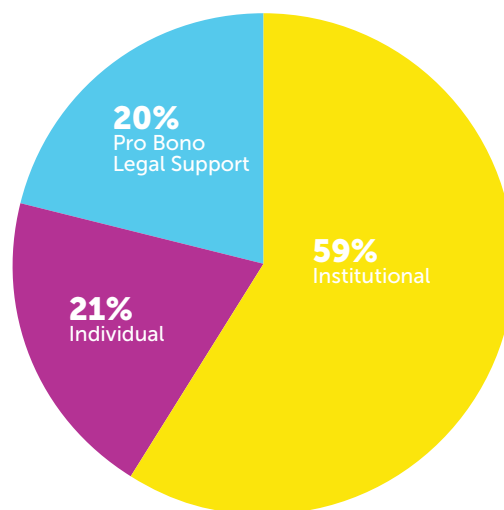
Government Contracts & Grants	\$11,810,294
Contributions	115,954
Special Events	22,414
Program Fees	109,637
Other Income	545,078
Total Revenue and Support	\$12,603,377

EXPENSES

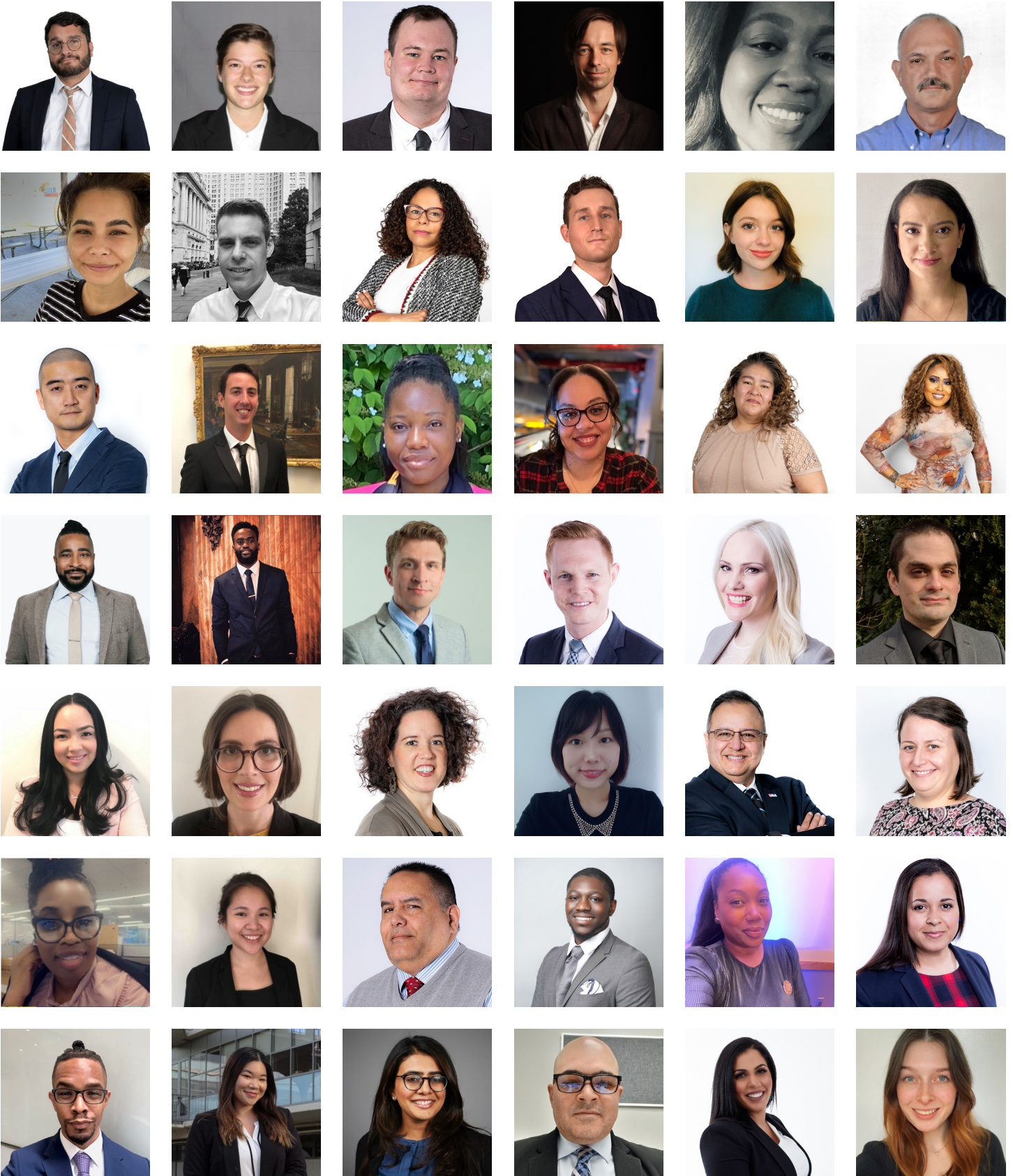
Program Services	\$11,378,678
Supporting Services	\$1,771,208
Total Expenses	\$13,149,886

Change in Net Assets (546,509)

CONTRIBUTIONS



BROOKLYN A STAFF 2023



BROOKLYN A STAFF CONT.



 [bkalegal](#)

 [BrooklynLSCA](#)

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 Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A