



# Defending the Next Generation

2022 Impact Report



# Table of Contents

- 01 OUR MISSION
- 02 OUR APPROACH
- 03 LETTER FROM J. DAVID BENDER, BOARD PRESIDENT
- 04 LETTER FROM SASHA NAIMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- 05 BY THE NUMBERS
- 06 POLICY PRIORITY
- 07 BEYOND THE NUMBERS
- 09 NKU CHASE CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER CLINIC
- 10 VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: LOUISE ROSELLE
- 11 OUR TEAM
- 12 BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS: SHELBY ADAMS
- 13 OUR SUPPORTERS

## CLC's Mission

Children's Law Center, Inc. (CLC) is a unique nonprofit legal service center protecting the rights of children and youth – so they can grow up in safe, healthy ways. Established in 1989, CLC offers vital advocacy in the child welfare system, justice system, education system, and beyond. CLC provides services in Kentucky and Ohio, while collaborating with regional and national organizations on youth law and policy.

## **Legal Advice & Representation**

CLC attorneys provide high-quality legal advice and representation for hundreds of Kentucky's and Ohio's most vulnerable children, teenagers, and young adults. CLC helps youth overcome barriers to education, employment, housing, safety, basic needs, healthy relationships, and more.

## **Policy Research & Development**

CLC identifies areas where legal systems need reform and works to bring about changes on local, state, and national levels. CLC believes that systems change must include the voices and experiences of directly-impacted people. CLC uplifts and amplifies the voices of children and families in all policy advocacy.

## **Our Approach**

### **Community Engagement & Education**

CLC conducts presentations for social-service agencies, schools, parents, legal professionals, and community members who increase the health and safety of children. CLC also develops and distributes educational materials that help communities to get better outcomes for children.

### **Information & Referral**

CLC receives hundreds of calls each year from children and families seeking clarification of their legal rights or requesting referral sources, attorneys requiring technical assistance, and social service providers with questions about their clients' rights. CLC provides assistance and makes referrals as appropriate.



# Letter From J. David Bender, Board President

Friends of CLC,

I have been closely involved with Children's Law Center since I joined its Board of Directors (for the first time) over 20 years ago! Working with CLC has been an opportunity to learn, to grow, and most importantly, to help kids.



CLC has a mission that everyone can get behind – defending the rights of children and youth. Even so, we need you to help us share our work and build support for our clients.

For many, CLC has been a well-kept secret. **I'd like to see that change.**

As the Board President of the Children's Law Center, I am excited and hopeful about deepening CLC's impact. CLC is ideally positioned to live up to and exceed the goals upon which it was founded. The work isn't over, and I hope we can count on you to help.

For those of you who have supported us – for a month, a year, or since 1989 – thank you. We wouldn't be able to do this without you.

With gratitude,

*J. David Bender*

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## Our Work is Never Finished

48% of children we serve have legal issues related to physical, mental, or sexual abuse.

Each year in Ohio, around 80% of youth transferred to the adult justice system are Black.



# Letter From Sasha Naiman, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This report comes at a crucial time for Children’s Law Center. Our organization has evolved and adapted to meet the growing needs of youth across Kentucky and Ohio. Through a pandemic, economic uncertainty, and changes in our leadership, CLC steadfastly worked to safeguard children’s rights in the education system, child-welfare system, justice system, and beyond.



CLC is now in a time of significant growth and strategic realignment. We have been able to expand our programs; create multiple new partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and government entities; re-activate our office in Lexington; increase support/capacity for CLC’s programs in Northern Kentucky, Cincinnati, and Cleveland; and so much more. Most importantly, as you will learn in this report, our advocacy has led to many positive legal outcomes for individuals and broader system-level reforms.

In my year-and-a-half with CLC, I have witnessed the most inspiring, impactful work done on behalf of children. I am grateful to work alongside the dedicated staff and Board throughout 2022 and into 2023. I am also incredibly grateful for supporters, like you, who care deeply about helping children, teenagers, and young adults.

Together, we are moving into an exciting chapter – with a momentum that will carry CLC to new heights. As we learn, grow, and build, CLC will always keep youth at the center of our vision. We hope you’ll follow along as we continue doing what we do best: protecting the rights of youth.

Sincerely,

*Sasha Naiman*

16% of youth in Kentucky and Ohio have disabilities and need specialized education support.

1.4 million kids are economically disadvantaged in Kentucky and Ohio.





# By the Numbers

**Holistic legal advice and representation for 393 youth**

**77 victims of crime**

**46 children needing protection orders**

**17 children needing juvenile defense**

**102 youth in traumatic, high-conflict custody disputes**

**47 victims of dependency, neglect, and abuse**

**26 students needing education advocacy**

**69 youth seeking record sealing/expungement**

**40 community education and outreach activities reaching over 1,600 people**

**223 intakes referred to partner agencies**

**9 students trained in our NKU Chase CLC Clinic**

**9 staff members**

Operating Revenue	2022
Government Grants, Subgrants, & Contracts	\$715,811
Employee Retention Credit	\$140,255
Foundations	\$359,564
Special Events	\$43,237
Contributions	\$19,294
Miscellaneous	\$1,500

Operating Expenses	2022
Program Services	\$639,638
Management & General	\$117,761
Fundraising	\$51,956

**2022 Net Profit \$446,562**  
**Ending Net Assets: \$1,328,621**

*These financials are reported on an accrual basis, including 2022 revenue from multi-year grants and contracts that will be used for subsequent years.*



"I see how this system works. When you are bound over they throw you to the wolves. That's how it is. I have been in the adult system since I was 14 years old. Take it from me, I know." - G.W.



Our policy priorities are informed by the lived experiences, needs, and voices of the youth and families we serve. CLC steps in to remove barriers and improve breakdowns in legal systems.

## Policy Priority

### Reducing the Number of Youth in Adult Courts & Prisons

In the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, CLC identified an issue ripe for policy reform: reducing the number of youths in Ohio's adult criminal-legal system. Specifically, there was a critical need to limit "bindover," the process by which children are prosecuted as adults and sentenced to adult prisons. Under current Ohio law, bindover can be mandatory – meaning, in certain situations, a child must be transferred to adult court even if the judge knows this is unfair or inappropriate for a case.

With leadership from Attorney Leah Winsberg, CLC has worked strategically with stakeholders across Ohio to raise awareness about bindover and reduce its harms. Leah educated community groups about bindover – reaching over 900 people in 2022 – and was instrumental in providing resources for judges, prosecutors, faith leaders, and others impacted by bindover laws. In 2022, CLC produced opinion editorials, an in-depth policy brief, and multiple amicus briefs to the Ohio Supreme Court, seeking to improve bindover policy for Ohio's children. Most importantly, CLC provided subject-matter expertise to help legislators draft and consider a bill to eliminate mandatory bindover in Ohio.

The work is not done, and CLC does not give up! In 2023, CLC continues working at state and local levels to find alternative, developmentally-appropriate solutions for justice-involved youth. We are excited to share more success soon.

# Beyond the Numbers

Working closely with partner agencies and directly-impacted youth, CLC created and led the first **Greater Cincinnati Summit on Youth Justice & Safety**. To plan and execute the Summit at every step, CLC developed a Youth Leadership Team – who had personal experience with justice systems, homelessness, violence, and beyond.

The Summit brought together elected officials, court leaders, social service leaders, faith leaders, and other stakeholders who want to improve youth-justice and safety. The convening focused on root causes and policy solutions for justice-system involvement and other challenges youth face.

CLC and the Youth Leadership Team subsequently were invited to meet with the Cincinnati Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Manager, and other City leadership to discuss safety, youth trauma, youth-police relations, entrepreneurship/ career development programs, and positive youth-focused activities in the community.







*The following fictional story is broadly based on many real cases CLC has taken, and it reflects the vital legal services CLC provides for children. We value client anonymity and, in this story, we do not intend to include case-specific facts about any particular client.*

Tommy struggled in elementary school because of his disability. Despite his parents' best efforts, the family could not convince Tommy's school to provide the extra support that Tommy needed to succeed. Luckily, they found CLC.

CLC Attorney Nick Caprino helped the family understand their rights and options under education law. Nick worked with the family and the school to create an individualized education program (IEP) for Tommy, which provided accommodations and services he would receive from the school for free. Tommy's family was thrilled that the IEP would hold the school accountable to continue helping Tommy reach his educational goals.

With CLC's help, the communication between the school and the parents improved – and everyone was happier with a collaborative interaction moving forward. Tommy and his family were able to get the services needed to ensure Tommy could reach educational milestones. And, Tommy now has a structure and support system to help him succeed in school.

# 10 Years of Success

## NKU Chase Children's Law Center Clinic



**“One of the most exciting things about the Clinic is that students come in thinking and acting like students and graduate thinking and acting like lawyers.”**

**- NKU Chase CLC Clinic Director, Professor Amy Halbrook**

The NKU Chase Children's Law Center Clinic, which celebrated its 10th year taking students in 2022, is a partnership with Northern Kentucky University's Salmon P. Chase College of Law. The Clinic offers an educational model where law students gain real-world experience representing young clients while being closely supervised by Chase Law Professors Amy Halbrook and Marianne Chevalier.

In 2022, Clinic Director Amy Halbrook and Clinic Supervisor Susie Bookser worked with 7 law students in the Clinic. Each student had the opportunity to appear in court with a limited license, participate in significant litigation activities, and complete a research project.

Clinic student activities included client interviewing, counseling, drafting, investigation, trial preparation, mediation, and court appearances. Case work focused on over 20 high-conflict custody and juvenile justice matters.

Chase Student Holli Thomas reflected: "After doing the 'coursework,' which included in-depth class discussion, I could then apply what I had learned in class to my actual cases. Perhaps what I enjoyed most about learning from [Susie and Amy] were the one-on-ones before a court appearance. They met with each of us before every court appearance to ensure we knew exactly what to expect, the questions that may be asked, and the overall objective of the hearing. It was a nerve-racking experience – standing up in court for the first time – but I knew that I was prepared thanks to their guidance."

Other Clinic students reflected on their experience as transformative. Clinic student Laura Caudill noted, "I am no longer scared of standing up and advocating for clients in the courtroom, and this will allow me to truly make changes in the world around me that I had only dreamt of before." This experience is true for most of the Clinic students.

Thank you to Amy Halbrook, Susie Bookser, and Marianne Chevalier for volunteering your time to sustain this partnership and provide Chase students with real-world experience around youth law!

## Volunteer Spotlight

**Louise Roselle**, acclaimed attorney and 2022 recipient of the **John L. Muething Lifetime Achievement in Law Award**, has been engaged with CLC for years as a board member, donor, and most recently as a volunteer in the NKU Chase CLC Clinic.

Louise shared this about her relationship with CLC:

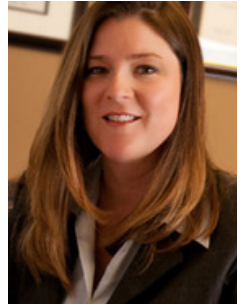
"Children's Law Center does amazing work protecting children. CLC's dedication to providing legal representation, advocacy in schools, and community education has been benefiting kids for over 30 years – and this work has only become more imperative in recent years. I'm proud to engage with an organization that so regularly effects positive change for kids in Ohio and Kentucky. "

We are so grateful for all of the ways Louise has chosen to give back to CLC. Thank you, Louise!





# Our Team



- Sasha Naiman**, Executive Director | Attorney  
**Ashley Booher**, Project Administrator | Student Program Coordinator  
**Nick Caprino**, Attorney  
**Maria Catrina Castro**, Attorney  
**Erica Helmle**, Attorney  
**Sydney Pepper**, Development Director  
**Noah Seabrook**, Youth Justice Fellow  
**Louise Sheard**, Director of Operations  
**Katie Taylor**, Lexington Director | Attorney  
**Leah Winsberg**, Senior Policy Attorney

\*Volunteers from the Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law.



- Amy Halbrook**, CLC Chase Clinic Director\*  
**Marianne Chevalier**, CLC Chase Clinic Supervisor\*

## Building Future Leaders

Shelby Adams interned at CLC during law school. This Fall, she is excited to start her legal career as a Municipal Trial Counselor in the Juvenile Division of the Hamilton County Public Defender's Office. Shelby shared with us how CLC helped her become a skilled, impactful, confident lawyer.



### **Q: What drew you to want to work at CLC?**

**A:** Before law school, I knew I wanted to help people, make a difference in my community, and make an impact on individuals in a positive way. CLC does exactly that. When I saw the internship opportunity posted at CLC, I knew it was perfect for me. I was able to work with children, impacting their lives not only in specific cases, but also in a broader way through policy advocacy. I was also able to learn and grow in an environment where people really cared about helping children and were making a positive impact in the world.

### **Q: How did CLC prepare you for your career as an attorney?**

**A:** Honestly, CLC prepared me for my career as an attorney in so many ways! For example, during my 2L year, I learned about record sealing and expungement laws in Ohio, and I helped CLC attorneys prepare sealing and expungement applications for youth. I also researched and helped CLC Attorney Leah Winsberg to write a policy brief about reducing the number of youth "bound over" into adult courts and adult prisons. This brief has been used all over the state of Ohio!

When I returned to CLC my 3L year, I was given further opportunities to prepare for my career as an attorney. Under the supervision of CLC's Executive Director, I was able to argue in court on behalf of a CLC client—while learning how to be a strong legal practitioner! He was working to overcome unemployment and homelessness, and he wanted to turn his life around. But, his past criminal records and related court debt (like fines and court costs) were standing in his way. After I argued my motion, the judge converted the court debt into community service, which means the young man can finally close out old cases and, one day, become eligible for record sealing. Even though the prosecutor objected, I felt prepared and I won the case, moving the client one step closer to housing, employment, and a second chance. This was also a hugely-empowering personal success, and it solidified for me that I should continue working to help kids in need.



# Our Supporters

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### **CLC gratefully acknowledges:**

Gifts made in memory of Lowell Schechter

Gifts made in memory of Mary Fisher

Gifts made in honor of Susie Bookser

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[www.childrenslawky.org](http://www.childrenslawky.org)



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