

CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER  
OF MINNESOTA

# Annual Report



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

2024

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# Mission Statement



**Children’s Law Center of Minnesota promotes the legal rights and well-being of children and youth. CLC’s staff and volunteers provide direct representation of children and youth, primarily in the child welfare system, and advocate for changes in the systems that affect their lives.**



# History & Impact

Founded in 1995, the Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) is dedicated to promoting the legal rights and well-being of children and youth. Operating primarily in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, CLC serves vulnerable foster care youth through direct legal representation, systemic advocacy, education, and outreach. By empowering young people in the child welfare system, CLC ensures their voices are heard and their rights upheld, fostering improved opportunities and outcomes.

## **Advocating for Children's Rights**

CLC's team of pro bono and in-house attorneys champion the rights of children, including:

- Remaining in their local schools.
- Receiving legal representation from age 10 and older.
- Maintaining connections with siblings and family members.
- Ensuring child protection agencies make reasonable efforts to keep siblings united.
- Identifying family and kinship placement options.
- Establishing independent living plans starting at age 14.

CLC provides an array of services tailored to the needs of Minnesota's foster care youth:

## **Direct Representation**

CLC's attorneys advocate to ensure clients' rights are protected. This includes incorporating the youth's preferences, securing fair treatment, upholding due process, obtaining appropriate placements, and connecting them with resources to address their trauma.

## **Systemic Reform**

CLC actively collaborates with local programs and stakeholders to advocate for systemic changes that better support at-risk and foster care youth.

## **Education**

Through tailored materials and programs, CLC educates foster care youth about their rights in areas such as housing, employment, healthcare, voting, finances, and consumer rights. CLC attorneys also provide legal training for all new volunteer lawyers and continuing legal education options throughout the year. Providing the necessary base and ongoing training ensures CLC clients can receive the best representation and care.

## **A Legacy of Impact**

Over nearly three decades, CLC has:

- Trained more than 1,000 volunteer attorneys.
- Provided legal representation to over 4,100 abused and neglected children.
- Advocated for systemic reforms to protect vulnerable youth statewide.

As CLC celebrates its 29th anniversary in 2024, the organization remains steadfast in its mission to amplify the voices of foster care youth and champion their rights within Minnesota's child welfare system.

# Letter from CLC's Executive Director

Dear Supporters,

Thank you for your continued strong support of Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) in 2024. Child welfare initiatives are always evolving and 2024 delivered some significant changes, including the adoption of the Minnesota African American Preservation & Child Welfare Act, the establishment of the Minnesota Supreme Court Council on Child Protection, and a new Department of Children, Youth, and Families to name just a few. CLC's dedicated staff remains at the forefront as these changes are implemented. We continue to take part in important child protection policy discussions and the resulting recommendations, always keeping the child's protection and perspective at the forefront.

Our amazing legal team, along with 200+ volunteer attorneys from over 110 law firms, provided quality legal representation to 420 children and youth in foster care in 2024, ensuring they had the opportunity to express their perspectives and wishes in the courtroom. Our dedicated legal team also provided ongoing legal training to our volunteers to equip them with the most recent and relevant information to effectively represent our vulnerable clients. With strong and diverse financial support, CLC also ended 2024 in a strong financial position, with total equity increasing by 12% year over year.

CLC will be celebrating its 30th year in 2025, and this milestone year will bring many changes in child protection. We remain steadfast in our commitment to providing direct and amicus representation for abused and neglected children and youth ages 10-21 involved in the child welfare system. We also ensure our presence at the table to help formulate important policy positions that affect their lives. In the coming year, aspire to further support child welfare workers, primarily in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, in ensuring that all children and youth ages 10-21 in the child welfare system receive quality legal representation.

With your continued support, CLC will build upon the past 29 years to help Minnesota's most vulnerable children and youth navigate the most challenging times of their lives, providing them with a platform for success.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Children's Law Center of Minnesota.

With gratitude,

**Susan Dioury**  
Executive Director  
Children's Law Center of Minnesota

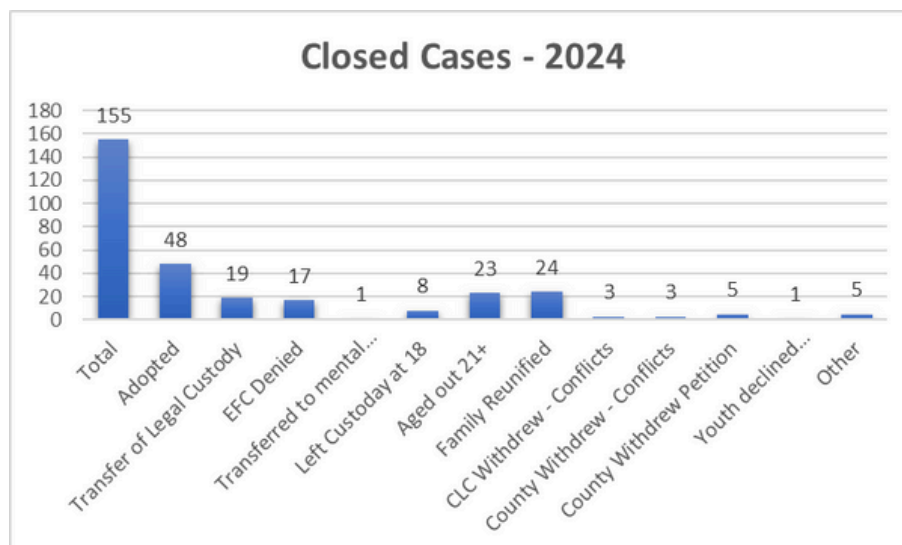
# 2024 Demographics

## Advocating for Change: In 2024, CLC Empowered 420 Youth Amid Ongoing Challenges in Minnesota's Child Welfare System

According to the most recent Minnesota Out-of-Home report, over 11,200 children experienced out-of-home placement in 2022. This report noted that “Children enter out-of-home care for many reasons; in recent years, Minnesota has seen a shift from neglect to caretaker drug abuse as the most common primary reason for removal for children across the age span; this remained true in 2022.”

Regarding racial disparities, the 2022 report highlights that American Indian children were approximately 16 times more likely than white children to be in out-of-home care. The 2022 report also noted the ongoing disproportionate representation of children of color in Minnesota's child welfare system. African American children and children who identified as Hispanic (of any race) were both two times more likely than white children to experience out-of-home care. Children identifying as two or more races were about eight times more likely than white children to be in out-of-home care. These statistics underscore the ongoing disproportionate representation of children of color in Minnesota's child welfare system.

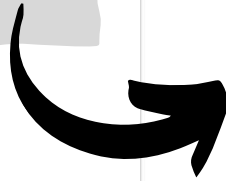
Our youth resource team also provides culturally specific support, including resources for African-American therapists, Indigenous services, and other tools for cultural connection. We also work closely with youth to identify and advocate for placements that align with their cultural identity and personal wishes, reducing the risk of placement disruptions and homelessness.



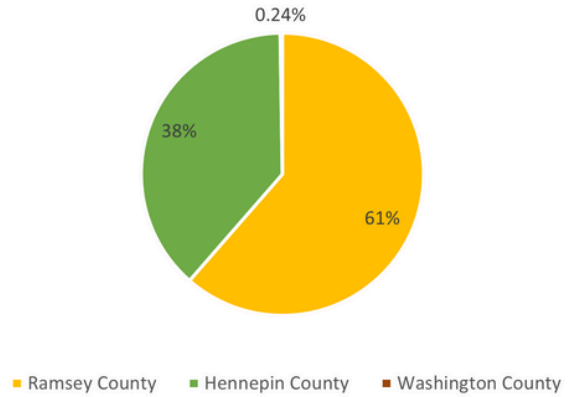
Children in foster care need strong advocates to ensure they receive the services and support they are entitled to but may not know about. For 29 years, CLC has been a vital resource, empowering children to access the care and opportunities they need to move forward.

Of the 420 youth served in 2024, CLC saw 155 cases to completion. Meaning, our clients were either reunited with family, adopted, or aged out of the foster care program.

In 2024, CLC represented 420 clients. 61% (258) of cases were in Ramsey County and 38% (161) were in Hennepin County, 0.24% (1) was in Washington County.

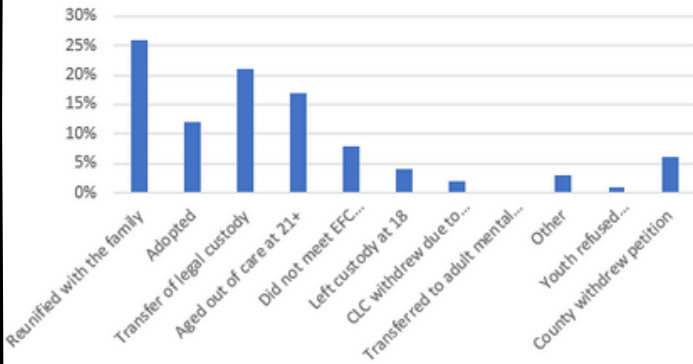


Percentage of 2024 CLC Cases By County

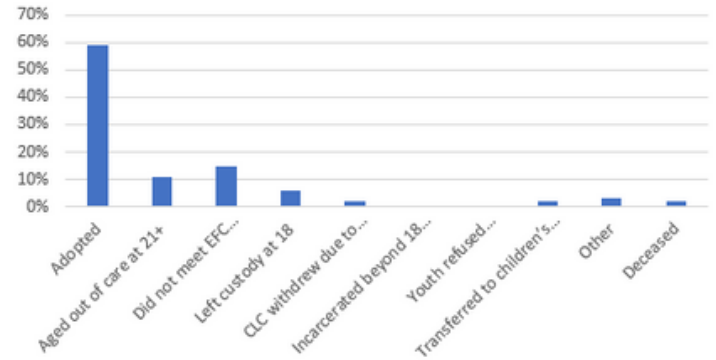


In Ramsey County, notable results include 26% of youth being reunified with their families, 12% being adopted, and 21% experiencing a transfer of legal custody. Additionally, 17% aged out of care at age 21 or older, while 8% did not meet Extended Foster Care (EFC) requirements. A smaller percentage left custody at age 18 (4%), and 6% saw the county withdraw their petition. Other outcomes, such as CLC withdrawing due to conflicts (2%) or youth refusing representation (1%), were less common. No cases involved transfer to adult mental health services.

Ramsey County Outcomes Percentage



Hennepin County Outcomes Percentage

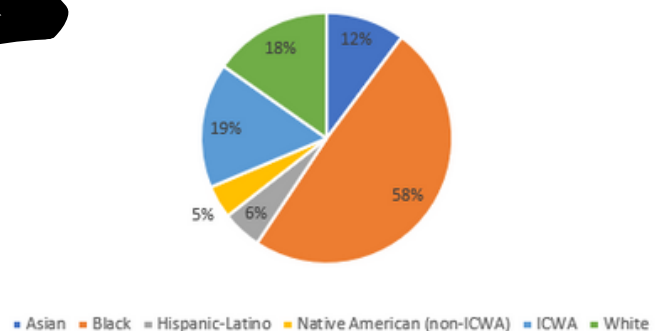


In Hennepin County, adoption was the most prevalent outcome, with 59% of youth adopted. Other significant outcomes include 11% aging out of care at 21+ and 15% not meeting EFC requirements. A small percentage left custody at age 18 (6%) or saw outcomes like the county withdrawing due to conflicts (2%), transfer to children's mental health services (2%), or deceased youth (2%). Unlike Ramsey County, no youth in Hennepin County refused representation or were incarcerated beyond age 18.



Of the 420 open cases in 2024, 369 cases (88%) involved clients who identified as BIPOC.

2024 Client Racial Demographic Percentages



# Community Advocacy

CLC is a leader in child advocacy, working with community partners to improve outcomes for foster youth. Through its more than 200 dedicated volunteer attorneys, CLC provides expertise to guide professionals and influence policies and practices that benefit foster youth. At the heart of its mission is a commitment to equity, actively engaging with the community to challenge and dismantle systems that perpetuate racial discrimination.

CLC also participates in key local and national coalitions focused on youth welfare, including the Minnesota Supreme Court Juvenile Protection Rules Committee, the Children's Justice Initiative Advisory Committee and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health, and the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel.

## Volunteers & Training

Our work at CLC would not be possible without the invaluable contributions of our volunteer attorneys. Their expertise, dedication, and diverse skill sets are critical to providing high-quality representation and advocating for the whole child.

In 2024, CLC trained 29 new volunteer attorneys through our On-Demand Training program. This comprehensive training equips attorneys to effectively represent youth in foster care by preparing them to navigate juvenile court proceedings, secure appropriate services, and negotiate settlements. Pro bono attorneys working with CLC benefit from the ongoing support of our staff attorneys and Youth Resource Manager, who provide guidance, resource connections, and expertise on addressing the developmental and educational needs of clients.



Additionally, CLC offered the following Continuing Legal Education (CLE) trainings in 2024 to enhance the skills and knowledge of our volunteer attorneys:

- Ethics and Best Practices When Representing Youth in Care
- Recent Legislative Changes Affecting Child Protection Practice
- Nuts and Bolts of CHIPS Practice
- Reasonable Efforts in Child Protection Cases
- Trauma-Informed Care: A Native Cultural Perspective on Healing
- New Volunteer Training at Maslon
- On-Demand New Volunteer Training

These training opportunities ensure our volunteers are equipped to provide exceptional advocacy and support for youth in foster care.



# Financial Statement

Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) is committed to transparency and accountability in managing the resources entrusted to us by our donors, supporters, and grantors. The financial data below provides a detailed overview of CLC's income and expenses for the 2024 fiscal year. These figures reflect our dedication to maximizing impact by investing in programs and services that support our mission of advocating for children in foster care. A complete audited financial statement is available upon request, providing additional insights into our financial stewardship and organizational health.

## 2024 Income & Expenses

### Income

State/County:	\$459,716
Foundations:	\$255,500
Corporations:	\$31,875
Law Firms & Bar Foundations:	\$124,000
Individuals:	\$60,000
Other:	\$20,260

**Total Revenue:** \$951,351

### Expenses

Salary & Benefits:	\$850,000
Insurance & Fees:	\$13,100
Rent & Utilities:	\$15,660
Fundraising:	\$35,000
Other Equipment & Supplies:	\$27,000

**Total Expenses:** \$1,000,696

**Net Income:** \$(49,345)

## Links To Financial Documents:

[CLC 990 Form](#)

[2024 Organizational Budget](#)

[CLC IRS Determination Letter](#)

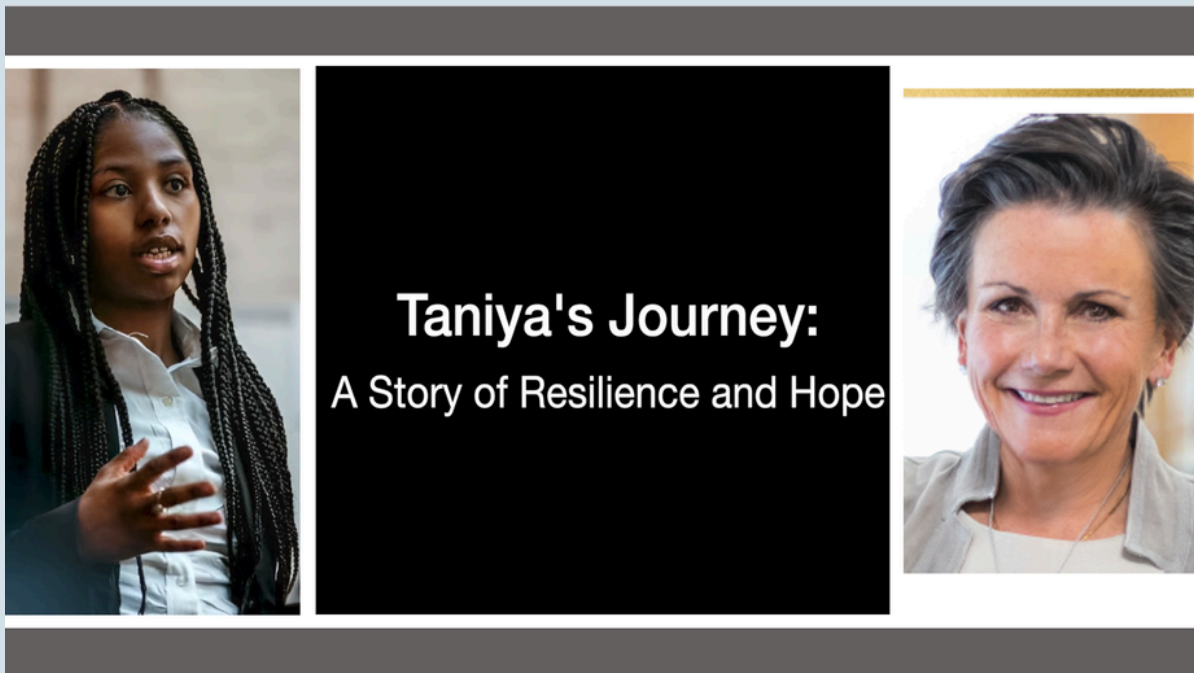


## Foundation Feature

In 2024, Children's Law Center of Minnesota was honored to receive a generous \$30,000 grant from the **Schulze Family Foundation**, paired with an exciting \$10,000 matching challenge. To unlock the match, CLC needed to raise \$10,000 in donations meeting specific donor criteria.

Rising to the challenge, CLC leveraged the match to inspire support during our November Give to the Max campaign, surpassing the goal by raising an incredible \$18,665 in qualifying donations. Thanks to the remarkable generosity of our donors and the Schulze Family Foundation, we not only met but exceeded expectations—empowering us to continue advocating for children in foster care and making a meaningful difference in their lives.

# Impact Story



## Fostering Strength: Taniya's Journey with CLC

["Taniya's Journey: A Story of Resilience and Hope"](#) is a compelling video premiered at CLC's 29th Anniversary Celebration of Champions.

Taniya is a former CLC client who shares her foster care journey, including how the help and guidance of CLC Volunteer Attorney, Kathleen Marron, made a positive impact on her life.

"She made me feel like I'm human again," said Taniya. "If it wasn't for her, I don't know where I would be at this point."

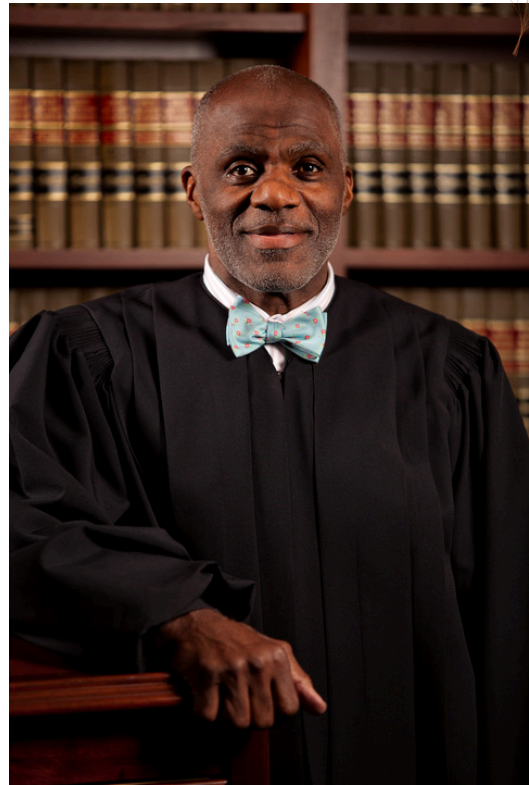
"I'm really proud of Taniya," reflected Marron. "She's evolved into this beautiful young woman who's now a great mom to her two kids."



# Celebrations



At the **29th Anniversary Celebration of Champions Benefit & Awards** held on September 19, 2024, at the picturesque Nicollet Island Pavilion, Children's Law Center of Minnesota proudly honored individuals and organizations for their exceptional dedication and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of children and youth in the foster care system. These remarkable award recipients were celebrated for their impactful contributions, advocacy, and compassion, which have profoundly supported our mission of amplifying the voices of vulnerable youth. Surrounded by supporters, volunteers, and community leaders, this inspiring evening highlighted the incredible work being done to create a brighter future for foster children.



**Rosalie E. Wahl Justice for Children Award: Justice Alan Page**

In recognition of his compassion, leadership, and dedication to bettering the lives of Minnesota's children.



**Distinguished Service Award: Megan Helstrom, Shantai Pai, Chad Snyder, Rick Snyder, and Thomas Wheeler**

For extraordinary dedication and commitment to representing children and youth in foster care and for their exemplary commitment to uplifting the work of CLC.



**Heroes for Children Award: Sheri Reimers**

In honor of the significant impact she has made for children in Minnesota and her personal and professional dedication to advocating for foster care youth.

# Board of Directors

We are deeply grateful to our Board of Directors for their invaluable contributions to CLC's success. Our board members go above and beyond by volunteering with clients, championing our mission within the legal community, and generously sharing their expertise and talents. Their dedication, strategic vision, and philanthropic spirit are instrumental to our work.

## 2024 CLC Board of Directors

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Children's Law Center of Minnesota

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**Jamie Kurtz, Esq.**  
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**Melissa Raphan, Esq.**  
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# Sponsors



We are deeply grateful for the incredible support of our sponsors, whose generosity fuels our mission to advocate for and empower children in foster care. Their contributions make a profound difference, helping us provide vital legal representation, resources, and opportunities for the youth we serve. Our 29th Annual Benefit was a testament to the impact of their partnership, and we are honored to have such compassionate and dedicated allies standing with us. Thank you for believing in our work and for being a driving force behind positive change in the lives of so many children.

## **Champion (\$15,000)**

Fredrikson & Byron  
Robins Kaplan LLP  
ACC Minnesota  
Dorsey & Whitney  
UnitedHealth Group

## **Justice (\$10,000)**

Jones Day

## **Humanitarian (\$7,500)**

Taft Stettinus & Hollister LLP  
Stinson

## **Advocate (\$5,500)**

Ballard Spahr LLP  
Delta Dental of Minnesota  
Thomson Reuters  
Merchant & Gould P.C.  
Greenberg Traurig  
3M



## **Benefactor (\$2,500)**

Green Espel. PLLP  
Winthrop & Weinstein  
Maslon  
Bassford Remele  
Ciresi Conlin  
Fox Rothschild  
Husch Blackwell  
Zelle LLP  
Hellmuth & Johnson  
FTI Consulting

## **Guardian (\$1,200)**

Gustafson Glueck PLLP  
Veritext  
Nelson Mullins  
Fish & Richardson  
Nichols Kaster  
Klitzer Rochel, PLLP  
Schaefer Halleen, LLC

## **Friend (Under \$1,200)**

Bremer Bank (\$500)  
Conlin Law Firm, LLC (\$250)  
Tom Swigert (\$500)