

A map of Pennsylvania is shown in the background, with a large blue rectangular overlay in the center. The text is white and centered within the blue area. The map shows major cities like Erie, Scranton, Harrisburg, Hershey, Lancaster, York, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, along with various interstate highways.

Regional Housing Legal Services

2014-2015

Annual Report



To Our Supporters,

This year, Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS) has remained mindful of the effects our work has on helping communities around Pennsylvania become stronger. Our dynamic legal team has aided partners around the Commonwealth in bringing their dreams for a better Pennsylvania to fruition. We are grateful to have the opportunity to share a vision with our clients and partners.

With this in mind, our 2014-2015 Annual Report is dedicated to the communities that we support everyday. From the streets of Kensington in Philadelphia, to the small businesses in Allegheny County, and the growing communities that lay between, RHLS remains committed to improving the lives of vulnerable Pennsylvanians, stabilizing households and neighborhoods, supporting community-based development, and advancing the fields of both housing and legal services.

Sincerely,

Mark Schwartz
Executive Director

Markita Morris-Louis
Board of Directors,
President

A background map of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing various streets, parks, and landmarks. The map is partially obscured by a blue semi-transparent rectangle containing the table of contents.

Table of Contents

Development Services.....	4
Policy and Programs.....	6
Publications.....	8
Pennsylvania Utility Law Project.....	9
Financial Summary.....	10
Board of Directors.....	12
Supporters.....	13

Development Services

RHLS' Development Services team provides direct legal and technical assistance to community-based, nonprofit organizations throughout the state that create affordable housing and engage in economic development.

This year, our team worked on **133** Development Services Projects, and brought **10** to financial close, resulting in more than **350** units of affordable housing created or preserved and over **\$51 million** in financing.

- 30 Affordable Housing Preservation
- 15 Economic Development
- 15 New Homeownership Developments
- 59 New Rental Developments
- 17 Homeownership Rehabilitation
- 12 Affordable Rental Housing Rehabilitation



Grand opening of the Tajdeed Residences in Philadelphia on October 21st, 2015.

Notable Projects

Market Square Apartments

Reading, PA

This preservation of 38 units of housing for low-income seniors, built in 1997, included a new roof, new windows, a water-shedding insulated wall system, a replacement of the building's facade, and weatherization to minimize environmental impact and increase utility affordability. Managed by the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) Mid-Atlantic, the one and two-bedroom apartments offer housing with access to public transportation, feature large windows, and supportive services.



Orinoka Civic House

Philadelphia, PA

The Orinoka Civic House will provide 51 units of affordable housing, as well as commercial and community space, from the previously abandoned Orinoka Mills Factory. The development will act as a catalyst to jumpstart NKCDC's "North of Lehigh Neighborhood Plan," which aims to expand the organization's work providing housing counseling, services referrals, tax assistance, and support for sustainability for residents of the community.

The Autism Housing Development Corporation of Pittsburgh (AHDCP) and ACTION-Housing, Inc., partnered to create this first of its kind development in the Commonwealth, with approximately half of the 42 units with a preference for adults living with autism. Supportive services provided by NHS Human Services will help enable residents to achieve independent living and integration in the community. In addition to brand new apartments, the development will feature a garden, quiet lounges, exercise rooms, and easy access to Pittsburgh's public transit system.

Dave Wright Apartments

Heidelberg, PA



Policy & Programs

Our Policy and Programs work ranges from proposing or commenting on changes to ordinances and regulations, to devising or revising key funding programs for affordable housing, economic development, or utilities. Our staff are frequently involved in activities that advance legal services and housing development through providing trainings, seminars, and educational materials on pressing issues.

Supporting Very Low-Income Populations

We continue to work with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and other allies to address the need for housing for vulnerable Pennsylvanians. RHLS successfully advocated for changes to PHFA's QAP three years ago. This advocacy has made a significant impact, with the adopted changes resulting in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit projects with supportive housing components funded for an estimated \$72 million, or 333 units of housing.

Housing Law Project

The Housing Law Project supports legal services programs that address issues related to affordable housing, including landlord tenant law, foreclosure, fair housing, and governmental programs. Major functions include: providing legal advocates across the Commonwealth with information about current issues; developing training sessions concerning important legal issues; and monitoring, reviewing, and recommending legislation and court rules to further the interest of Pennsylvania's low-income residents.

Policy & Programs

HEMAP Help Center and Act 91 Notice Revisions

The HEMAP Help Center provides expert advice on the most important parts of the HEMAP application, general information about the program, information regarding other potential resources for mortgage assistance, and help locating a certified housing counselor. After observing a reduction in HEMAP applications over the past year, RHLS has begun to work with partners to redesign the Act 91 Foreclosure notice to make it more “homeowner friendly,” and as a result, save more homes.

Section 3 Business Certification Program

RHLS has maintained the Section 3 Business Certification Program in Allegheny County, continuing to connect small businesses, contractors, and developers with the goal of maximizing the benefit of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development dollars. In addition to continuing efforts in Allegheny County, RHLS is working on the expansion of the certification program to include Montgomery County.

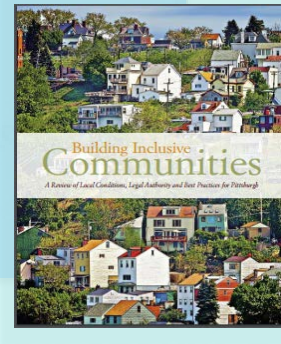
Public Housing Rental Subsidies

RHLS continues to advise Philadelphia City Council President to work on a way to put approximately 1,000 rental subsidies back into use, following the Philadelphia Housing Authority's restructuring.

Notable Publications

Building Inclusive Communities: A Review of Local Conditions, Legal Authority, and Best Practices for Pittsburgh

Prepared by Bob Damewood, Staff Attorney, the report recommends inclusionary zoning policies to help retain the city's diversity and vibrancy. Inclusionary zoning policies can either require or encourage local real estate developers to make a percentage of new housing units affordable to tenants with low-incomes. In exchange, developers may receive approval for zoning or land use as well as other public benefits. By reviewing local conditions, legal authority, and national best practices, the report lays the groundwork for realistic and implementable inclusionary zoning policies in Pittsburgh.

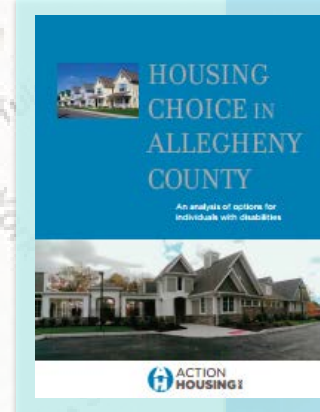


A National Scan for Supportive Housing Models for Youth with Disabilities in Housing Choice in Allegheny County

Rachel Blake, Associate Director, and Staff Attorney, Kim Dolan, collaborated with ACTION-Housing, Inc. to prepare an analysis of housing options for individuals with disabilities.

The report analyzes current housing resources for the United Way of Allegheny County's 21 and Able Initiative. With a rising demand for independent and community-based housing options for youth with physical challenges, this report aims to provide models for solutions.

Rachel Blake and Kim Dolan contributed Section 6 of the report, a *National Scan for Supportive Housing Models for Youth with Disabilities*.



Domestic Violence and Good-Cause Evictions in Pennsylvania After the 2013 Violence Against Women Act Amendment

Published in the The Sargent Shriver Poverty Law Center's Clearinghouse Review, this new article updates the one published in 2013 that discussed RHLS' efforts in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania to provide protections for survivors of domestic violence who face eviction due to a domestic violence disturbance. It explains how the expanded protections for survivors of domestic violence provided in the 2013 amendments to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) can be used as a defense to evictions, by using the "good cause" requirements in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) rental developments.

Pennsylvania Utility Law Project

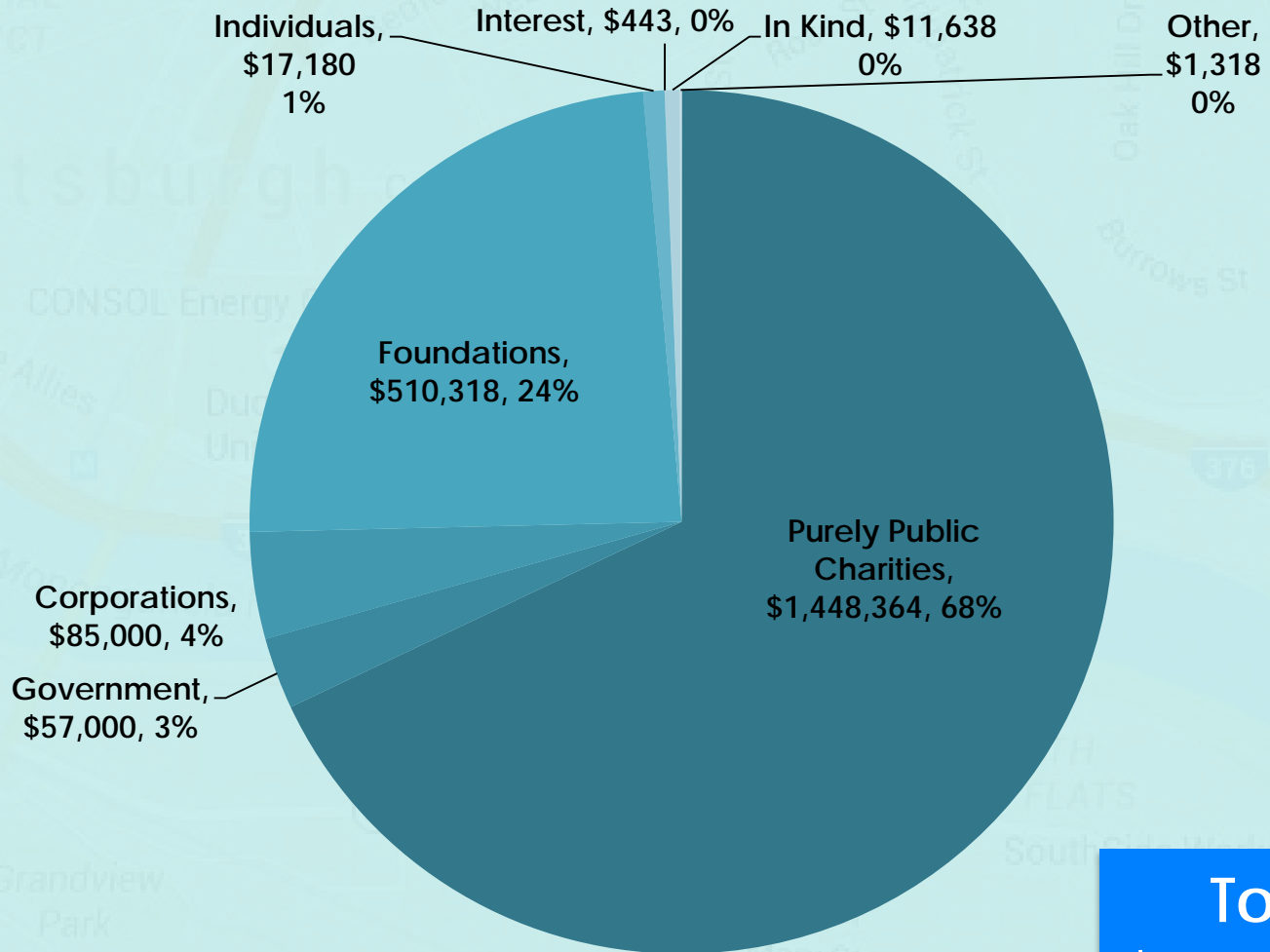
The Pennsylvania Utility Law Project (PULP) provides information, assistance, and advice about residential utility and energy matters affecting low-income consumers. PULP serves all of Pennsylvania. PULP is a specialized component of Regional Housing Legal Services, and is based in Harrisburg the state capital of Pennsylvania. PULP acts in coordination with the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network of Programs and other nonprofit agencies and community groups.



Accomplishments this Year

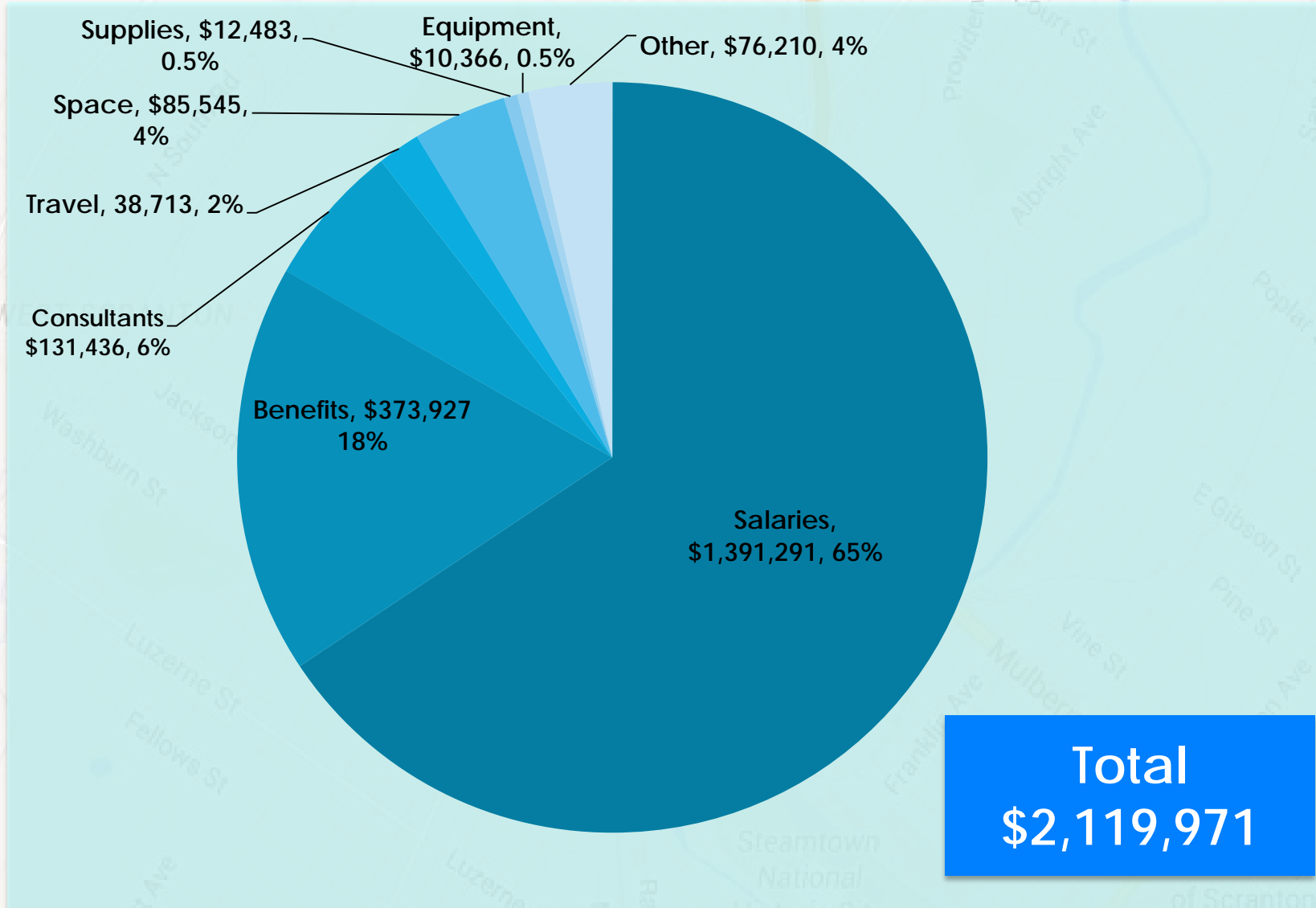
- Provided over 2,100 hours of policy work providing information to the Public Utility Commission, Department of Human Services, and Department of Commerce and Economic Development concerning low-income energy affordability and program development.
- Represented clients in nine impact utility cases, which generated a commitment by utilities providers to increase low-income energy efficiency funding by \$6,400,000 and \$5,570,000 of funding initially proposed to be reduced.
- Participated in two television programs on PCN concerning electric company competition and deregulation.
- Coordinated a group of organizations to form Energy Efficiency For All- Pennsylvania, with the goal of expanding weatherization dollars for affordable multi-family housing.
- Advocated and obtained substantial improvements to the Public Utility Code including the elimination of Friday termination and the elimination of security deposits for customer eligible for utility payment assistance programs.

Financial Summary: Revenue



Total
\$2,131,261

Financial Summary: Expenses



Board of Directors

Richard Cantor
Mark Dambly
Roy Diamond
Laura Fox
Eva Gladstein
George Gould
Gloria Guard
Adena Herskovitz
Joel Johnson
Kenneth Kind
Eve Biskind Klothen
William Koons

Kafi Lindsay
Markita Morris-Louis
Joyce Miller
Christine Paul
Sonny Popowsky
Robert Racunas
Larry Segal
Frances Sheehan
Hon. Kathryn Streeter-Lewis
Larry Swanson
David Unkovic
Thomas Witt



National
Historic Site

University
of Scranton

Supporters

ACTION-Housing, Inc.

Capital Access, Inc.

Energy Foundation

Fidelity National Title Insurance Company

Hellmann and Company

Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

Independence Foundation

Keystone Agency, Inc.

Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc.

National Penn Bancshares, Inc.

North Penn Community Health Foundation

Oak Foundation

PA Interest On Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA)

PA Legal Aid Network (PLAN)

Philadelphia Bar Foundation

Penrose

The Philadelphia Foundation

The Pittsburgh Foundation

PNC Foundation

Prestige Abstract Corporation

Project HOME

Wells Fargo Foundation

Regional Housing Legal Services

Thank You.

Glenside Office
2 S. Easton Road
Glenside, PA 19038
215-572-7300

Pennsylvania Utility Law
Project
118 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-236-9486

Pittsburgh
Rhls.org
facebook.com/rhlspa
twitter.com/RHLSPA

Pittsburgh Office
710 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1000
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-201-4304