

David C. Schopp
Chief Executive Officer

Rebecca L. Thayer
Chief Financial Officer

Nadine E. Patterson
Deputy Executive Director – Civil Practice

Ian M. Harrington
Deputy Executive Director – Criminal Practice



Lisa M. Patterson
President

Craig R. Bucki
First Vice President

Timothy Murphy
Second Vice President

John T. Kolaga
Secretary

Bryan Donohue
Treasurer

September 11, 2025

Ms. Olivia M. Owens
Clerk of Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

EC LEG SEP 12 '25 11:49

Re: Bi-Annual Report of the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.
Pursuant to Resolution 233 of May 6, 1975

Dear Ms. Owens:

Pursuant to the above-referenced Resolution, enclosed please find a copy of our organization's financial report for the period 07/01/2024 to 12/31/2024. Also enclosed is a roster of Legal Aid's Board of Directors, as well as a synopsis of meetings of the Board of Directors conducted within the six-month specified period of the report.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rebecca L. Thayer", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Rebecca L. Thayer, CPA
Chief Financial Officer

Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
Report to Clerk of Erie County Legislature
Period 1/1/24 -12/31/24

Source of Funds	
Federal	
State	68,639
City of Buffalo	-
Erie County	5,241,823
State/ County Grants	6,654,285
Other:	-
Cattaraugus County	70,000
Genesee County	100,000
Niagara County	632
Ontario County	558,209
Chautauqua County	32,986
Cayuga County	-
Orleans County	35,000
Total Funding	12,761,573
EXPENSE	
Personnel Expense	
Salaries	7,971,967
Fringe Benefits	2,033,284
	25.5%
Supplies/Equipment/ Services	
Space Rental	378,347
Utilities/telephone	68,488
Office Supplies	32,489
Office Equipment Rental	2,797
Postage/Postal Box Rental	11,793
Security/Maintenance	-
Travel	46,123
Insurance	21,883
Legal/accounting	45,726
Dues & Association Membership fees	19,846
Office printing copying	-
Service contracts	10,683
Interest Paid on Operating Loans	-
Training	93,924
Equipment Purchase	359,386
Other (i.e. consultant);	-
File Transport	7,440
Professional Fees	53,296
Subscriptions	171,915
Translation	17,638
Client Assistance	25,267
Transcripts	-
Experts	-
Administrative Expense	1,220,379
Miscellaneous	6,285
Office Build Out	-
IT Services	107,507
TOTAL EXPENSE	12,706,463

Unaudited Financials

THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.

Board of Directors

2024-2025 (Revised 9/17/24)

1. LISA M. PATTERSON, Esq. (645-6262) (Fax 645-7336) President
University at Buffalo School of Law
518 John Lord O'Brian Hall, North Campus
Buffalo, NY 14260 lpatter@buffalo.edu
2. CRAIG R. BUCKI, Esq. (847-5495) (Fax 852-6100) First Vice-President
Phillips Lytle LLP
One Canalside
125 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14203 cbucki@phillipslytle.com
3. TIMOTHY P. MURPHY, Esq. (845-1925) (Cell 417-7455) Second Vice-President
Federal Public Defender's Office
300 Pearl Street, Suite 200
Buffalo, New York 14202 timothy_murphy@fd.org
4. JOHN T. KOLAGA, Esq. (854-3400) (Fax 332-0336) Secretary
Rupp Pfalzgraf
1600 Liberty Building
Buffalo, NY 14202 kolaga@ruppbaase.com
5. BRYAN DONOHUE (416-7100) (c 465-4562) Treasurer
Tracsis US
1387 Fairport Rd., Bldg 900A
Fairport, NY 14450 bryan.donohue@tracsis.com
6. JESUTOWO "KOLA" ADENIJI, Esq. (423-834-3512)
Erie County
Edward A. Rath County Office Building
95 Franklin Street, 6th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202 Jesutowo.adeniji@gmail.com
7. MICHAEL AINA (853-9555 ext 625)
Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
290 Main Street, Suite 300
Buffalo, NY 14202 maina@legalaiddbuffalo.org
8. FARINA BARTH, Esq. (645-2885)
University at Buffalo School of Law
623 John Lord O'Brian Hall
Buffalo, NY 14260 fariname@buffalo.edu

THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.

Board of Directors
2024-2025 (Revised 9/17/24)

9. SHERENE BENNETT
Service Link Stop
Buffalo, NY sherenekbennett@gmail.com
10. REV. MARK E. BLUE (826-4940) (Fax 826-6069)
NAACP
18 Church Street
Lackawanna, NY 14218 rev.markblue@buffalonaacp.org
11. MEGHAN A. CORCORAN, Esq. (857-7064)
National Fuel
94 Liberty Terrace
Cheektowaga, NY 14215 corcoranm@natfuel.com
12. THOMAS DIINA (725-2024)
Erie County Sheriff's Office
2433 King Fisher Lane
Niagara Falls, NY 14304 tjdiina@gmail.com or Thomas.diina@erie.gov
13. CHARLES J. ENGLERT III (553-2622)
Barclay Damon LLP
208 Winterbrook Drive
Amherst, NY 14228 cenglert@barclaydamon.com
14. RYON FLEMING, Esq. (585-201-5722)
NYS Supreme Court
Genesee County Court
1 West Main Street
Batavia, NY 14020 rfleming@nycourts.gov
15. THOMAS HARE, Esq. (716-645-2326)
University at Buffalo School of Law
418 John Lord O'Brien Hall
Buffalo, New York 14260 tehare@buffalo.edu
16. ROLAND HAYES, Esq. (716-853-9555 x205)
Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.
290 Main Street, Suite 300
Buffalo, NY 14202 rhayes@legalaidbuffalo.org
17. BRADLEY A. HOPPE, Esq. (716-416-7025)
Bond, Schoeneck & King
Avant Building – Suite 900
200 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202-2107 bhoppe@bsk.com

THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.

Board of Directors

2024-2025 (Revised 9/17/24)

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 18. | KATHLEEN KUGLER, Esq.
Niagara County Assigned Counsel
219 Hawley Street
Lockport, NY | (471-0377)

LockportLawyers@gmail.com |
| 19. | JAMILA A. LEE, Esq.
University at Buffalo School of Law
317 John Lord O'Brian Hall
Buffalo, New York 14260 | (716-645-6205)

jamilale@buffalo.edu |
| 20. | JILL ROBINS
University at Buffalo Foundation, Inc.
Buffalo, NY | (698-0047)

jillrobins12@gmail.com |
| 21. | DAVID C. SCHOPP, Esq.
Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo
290 Main Street, Suite 400
Buffalo, NY 14202 | (853-9555 ext. 451) (Fax 853-3219)

dschopp@legalaidbuffalo.org |
| 22. | ERIN WHITCOMB, Esq.
Cattaraugus County Dept. of Social Services
PO Box 875
Ellicottville, NY 14731 | (307-8884)

elwhitcomb@cattco.org |

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.
September 17, 2024

PRESENT:

Kola Adeniji
Michael Aina
Farina Barth
Sherene Bennett
Craig R. Bucki
Meghan A. Corcoran
Thomas Diina
Bryan Donohue
CJ Englert
Ryon Fleming
Roland Hayes
Bradley Hoppe
John T. Kolaga
Kathleen Kugler
Jamila Lee
Timothy Murphy
Lisa M. Patterson
Nadine Patterson, Deputy Executive Director
Giovanna Macri, Deputy Executive Director
Steve Leonardo, Temporary CFO
Michael Pace, Communications & Development Manager

NOT ATTENDING:

Rev. Mark Blue
Thomas Hare
Jill Robins
Erin Whitcomb
David C. Schopp, Chief Executive Officer

Nadine Patterson, Deputy Executive Director, started by introducing Judith Gerber, Chief Attorney of the Attorneys for Children unit. Judy was recently recognized with the Howard A. Levine Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare. Judy reported on the Attorneys for Children Unit, which represents children in advocacy and education matters. The unit has been working on newer programs, specifically one supported by the Tower Foundation, to engage in more juvenile justice work. They were recently able to add a new social worker position.

President Lisa Patterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from June 18, 2024 meeting. A motion was made by John Kolaga, seconded by Meghan Corcoran, and was unanimously approved.

Michael Pace, Communication and Development Manager, reported on the Development Committee. They reviewed past fund raising, which has brought approximately \$30,000 annually. Michael is working on obtaining a client story for our direct mail campaign, as well as organizing a new event to be held on Giving Tuesday. This event could lead to fund raising, friend raising and engaging new people. Board members can invite guests, sponsor, and share social media posts.

*At this time, Michael Aina joined the meeting.

Reports of Committees

Governance Committee

Reviewed the 2023 audit and committee approved. Presented to the Board and Lisa Patterson requested a vote to approve the audit as it stands. Unanimously passed.

The Executive Board was up for election as follows:

Lisa Patterson, President
Craig Bucki, First Vice-President
Tim Murphy, Second Vice-President
John Kolaga, Secretary
Bryan Donohue, Treasurer

A vote was taken to elect all positions and all were in favor, with Roland Hayes abstaining.

Audit & Finance Committee

A meeting is scheduled for the 401(k) Plan Review in October.

Reports of Officers

Treasurers Report by Steve Leonardo

Budget and Mid-Year Financial Summary:

- *Budget has been modified to reflect a few known changes and discrepancies.*
 - *No change to Revenue from June budget update.*
 - *Change in Net Assets reduced from \$299K to \$168K*
- *A new 2024 detailed forecast incorporating the first half 2024 results has just been started and will be a data point in developing the 2025 LABB Budget. Both the 2024 forecast and the 2025 Budget will include Cash Flow projections.*

Mid-Year Estimated Statement of Activity vs July Revised Budget (\$000s)

	Estimated Results at 6/30	50% of July Revised Budget	Variance
Total Revenue	11,454	11,229	225
Total Expenses	11,116	11,145	(31)
Change in Net Assets	338	84	254

- Revenue running favorably primarily due to the non-recurring and fully funded longevity payment in the first half of year. (Almost \$1M with fringe as reported at June Board)
- First half Revenue and Change in Net Assets are favorably impacted by Erie County contract and likely to be adjusted down with end of year Deferred Revenue adjustments.

Current Cash Position

- Cash on hand as of 09/16/2024 approximately \$760,000
- No balance extended on \$2 Million line of credit at this time

Detailed Financial Overview with Treasurer and Other Board Members

- Previously, there was an action discussed to schedule a meeting with CFO, CEO, Treasurer and any interested Board Member to review the flow and basis of LABB Finances.
- Suggest scheduling this review before the November meeting.

Paycom Implementation – payroll processing only

- Went live with the first payroll paid from Paycom on August 9. Three payrolls have been processed in Paycom to date.
- Significant manual intervention has been happening to ensure timely and accurate processing, as well as interfacing data into LABB Financial Systems.
- Expect some improvement through learning curve and system familiarity and as system set-ups are finalized and better optimized.

Annual Audits and Filings

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M&T Bank – Three actions in progress that were previously approved by Board

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- *Opening additional account strictly for funding Paycom payroll.*
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Erie County Deferred Revenue

- *LABB had a \$2.2M Deferred Revenue balance related to Erie County on the books at the end of 2023 and entering 2024. This is the accumulation of multiple years where LABB received annual funding from Erie County that exceeded annual total costs incurred.*
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- *In our cover letter with our application to Mr. Cornell, we proposed utilizing \$820K dollars to support 2025 operations.*

Funding Highlights Including Recent Submissions

- *Erie County 2025 funding application submitted 08/30/2024*
 - *Requested \$5,352,987 which is a decrease of \$161,564 or 3%*
 - *Decrease in line with current and planned staffing levels*
- *ILS Hurrell-Harring – new contract finalized covering April 2024-March 2027*
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Old Business – none

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Respectfully submitted,



David C. Schopp
Assistant Secretary

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OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
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December 16, 2024

PRESENT:

Michael Aina
Farina Barth
Sherene Bennett
CJ Englert
Thomas Hare
Roland Hayes
John T. Kolaga
Kathleen Kugler
Timothy Murphy
Lisa M. Patterson
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David C. Schopp, Chief Executive Officer
Steve Leonardo, Temporary CFO
Nadine Patterson, Deputy Executive Director – Civil Practice

NOT ATTENDING:

Kola Adeniji
Rev. Mark Blue
Craig R. Bucki
Meghan A. Corcoran
Thomas Diina
Bryan Donohue
Ryon Fleming
Bradley Hoppe
Jamila Lee

President Lisa Patterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from November 19, 2024 meeting. A motion was made by John Kolaga, seconded by Tim Murphy, and was unanimously approved.

Reports of Committees

Development Committee

Michael Pace, Communications & Development Manager, has been working on Giving Tuesday and Peer-to-Peer Giving, which has raised over \$5,000. The annual direct mailing is in the mail today. Mailing was delayed due to a printer error.

Search Committee

Current issue is the salary range. Discussions continuing. We would like this to be a transparent process. The Search Committee roster is being worked on and will hopefully be complete by the beginning of January. Please send any thoughts or notes to Tim Murphy.

Governance Committee

Meeting scheduled for February 4th.

Reports of Officers

Treasurers Report by Steve Leonardo

2024 Estimate and Financial Summary:

- *No change in 2024 Estimate – not enough variability since November Board meeting to revise/change 2024*

Cash Position

- *Cash on hand as of 12/13/2024 approximately \$560,000*
- *No balance extended on \$2 Million line of credit at this time*
- *2024 ending cash position is impacted by delayed ILS Hurrell-Harring 2 billings and collection*
 - *HH 2 contract approved by New York State in August – still awaiting final steps from both Erie County and NYS to allow for \$1.9M billings from April 1 – September 30. Billing will not be completable until January.*
 - *Other early receipts not in last projection, likely to help off-set. Forecast slightly positive cash position at end of 2024.*

Audits, Compliance and Filings

- *Received Engagement letter from EFPR for 2024 audit*
- *401K plan Compliance issue discovered through Vanguard compliance testing relating to LABB contributions on prior year early retirement incentives.*
 - *Per plan documentation, these are not qualified contributions, however, LABB contributions are consistent with prior treatments and intent of retirement incentives.*
 - *Engaged with outside counsel to retroactively amend the plan to eliminate non-compliance. Will address at February board.*

Funding Highlights Including Recent Submissions

- *Erie County 2025 funding application submitted 08/30/2024 – no change from November Board meeting*
 - *Request of \$5,352,987 which is a decrease of \$161,564 or 3%. As part of submission, with Mark Cornell, Erie County budget director requested*

- that the bureau utilize ~\$800K deferred revenue on the books to support operations in 2025. He requested LABB retain about \$800K for future use*
 - *In our cover letter with our application to Mr. Cornell, we proposed utilizing \$820K dollars to support 2025 operations. Net value if \$4,532,987 included in 2025 Erie County budget.*
- *ILS Hurrell-Harring 2 – new contract signed covering April 2024-March 2027 – no change from November Board Meeting*
 - *LABB three-year funding of \$17.7M*
 - *First year funding of \$5.3M*
 - *Still awaiting Expense sheet from New York State*
- *Unified Court System – submitted budgets for three contracts covering 4/1/24 – 3/31/25 and totaling \$5.6M. Finalized in late September. no change from November Board Meeting*
- *New funding in process no change from November Board Meeting*
 - *Erie County Harm Reduction - \$250K over five years with ability to accelerate and finish in three years – submission and finalization in process.*
 - *Erie County Discovery - \$800K per year potentially retroactive to April 2024*
- *Interest on Lawyer Accounts (IOLA) – Submitted \$4.6M application for April 2025 through March 2030. No change from November Board Meeting – although this would be a significant annual increase over current funding.*
- *OTDA (Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance)*
 - *Prior contract ended 9/30/24 was funded at \$650K for past year.*
 - *Neighborhood Legal Services had been signaling there is less funding going forward and as a result, we had put two open positions in Civil on hold awaiting the funding level.*
 - *Recently notified that funding will be \$420K – a bit lower than anticipate and we are reworking plans.*

2025 Budget - Bottoms up budgeting in process. Items of note:

- *Funding is sufficient in all areas to support current and planned staff levels with Civil being very close and a work in process*
 - *Very recent OTDA funding level (as mentioned above).*
 - *Expect that we will be able to reallocate and get by until IOLA funding is known for 4/1/25.*
- *First pass 2025 revenue projection based on funding and staffing level:*
 - *\$20.9M in 2024 vs \$19.9M estimate for 2024*
 - *Estimate should be slightly conservative – for this initial pass, not assuming utilizing all available funding in Criminal and Appeals*
 - *Draft Administration expense budget in line with revenue budget*
- *Reminder - Health Insurance costs increasing roughly 33%. Most budgets built in summer included 7-10% increase. In most all cases, funding should be available due to staffing gaps or delays. Will explore alternative options for 2026 enrollment.*

- *Cash planning – Utilization of \$820K of Erie County Deferred revenue. Must continue to tighten up billing timing.*

Staffing

- *Open Financial Analyst (Bookkeeper replacement) position filled 11/25*
- *Working to fill role of Budget/Financial Analyst role. Second interview for a candidate upcoming*
- *Addressing Permanent CFO role upon achieving desired staff levels.*

CEO Report by David Schopp

David began with an update on the Buffalo City Court renovations. We are expected to start right after the new year, and it must be complete by March 31st. The cost came in lower than expected.

We anticipate 2 or 3 employees taking the retirement incentive.

We currently have fewer vacancies than we have had.

Nadine Patterson gave a brief update on the Civil Practice. The Civil Unit has reinstated their divorce walk-in clinic and has added an immigration attorney. In the Attorneys for Children Unit, we have received increased funding to add an appeals attorney and 2 additional social workers.

Sarah Ryan and Mike Deal gave an update on the Erie County working group, looking to possibly establish a County Public Defender Office. We have met with the working group and submitted a proposal. There isn't much new information while we await their report, but feedback has been positive regarding Legal Aid as the provider of these services.

Old Business – none

New Business – none

At this time, Lisa Patterson adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



David C. Schopp
Assistant Secretary