

Southern Nevada

SLP

SENIOR LAW PROGRAM

**Proudly Serving Senior
Residents of Southern
Nevada Since 1978**

2023 ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT

702.229.6596
snslp.org

**7690 W. Sahara Ave.
Las Vegas, Nevada
89117**

*Near Sahara and
Buffalo*

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

Senior Law Program/SLP was able to serve 2500 seniors with direct legal assistance in 2023, which is a 20% increase over 2022. In addition, SLP provided education to 2000 seniors on the topics of: what is a Power of Attorney Health Care and why should you have one; prevention tips to avoid ID Theft, Scams and Fraud; and providing resources that are available to help seniors before they end up in crisis, through our community outreach program.

- **SLP expanded our Senior Advocate Pro Bono Program** with the assistance of a generous grant from the Nevada Bar Foundation and three Sustaining Sponsors – Bailey Kennedy, LLP, Travis Brady, and Solomon, Dwiggin, Freer, Steadman LTD. We were grateful to welcome 71 caring attorneys who donated their valuable time in assisting vulnerable seniors with:
 - understanding basic estate planning
 - helping them complete their Power of Attorney Health Care documents
 - guiding them through the process needed for their Last Will and Testament
 - education related to ID Theft/Scams/Fraud – how to avoid being victimized
 - guardianship counseling
 - protecting their rights in merchant disputes
- **SLP launched our Hispanic Senior Outreach Initiative** in April 2023, funded by generous grants from ADSD, the Nevada Bar Foundation, UNLV Boyd School of Law/American Bar Endowment, and the Raiders’ Foundation. This campaign is reaching out to an underserved population in a culturally competent and caring manner. We are working closely with the professionals at Ericka Aviles Consulting to utilize proven strategies to connect with our Hispanic seniors and to build the credibility needed for SLP to be viewed as a trusted partner. We held our first basic Estate Planning/Power of Attorney Health Care workshop in Spanish in September and will be offering these opportunities 4-6 times per year.
- **SLP has focused on recruiting Spanish speaking pro bono attorneys** to support the increase in Spanish speaking at-risk older adult clients that we are beginning to see for legal services. We are grateful for the tremendous response from the generous attorneys of the Latino Bar Association and currently have seven (7) Spanish speaking attorneys who have committed to supporting us with pro bono service. A special thank you to SLP Vice Chair of the Board, Mariteresa Rivera Rogers, Esq. for devoting countless hours to help us build out the Hispanic/bilingual components of our organization.
- **SLP partnered with** the City Attorney of Boulder City, the Clark County Bar Association Community Service Committee, and the Office of Military Legal Assistance/Attorney General’s Office to host three Will-a-Thon events staffed by pro bono attorneys. These events were well received by seniors at the Boulder City Senior Center, Martin Luther King Jr. Senior Center, and the VA Medical Center. In addition to gathering information needed to draft the will documents, SLP was able to identify that 76% of the attendees also needed a POA Health Care document, which was proactively included with the Will document completion at the SLP office after the events.



NUMBERS FOR 2023

TYPES OF CLIENT MATTERS

Clients Served	2492	Estate Planning	1419
Assisted Without Litigation	2403	Evictions/Housing	615
Represented in Litigation	89	Scams/Fraud/Contract Disputes	201
Participants in Workshops	542	Income/Public Benefits	173
Community Outreach Participants	1995	Guardianship	63
POA Health Care Workshops with Pro Bono Attorneys	66	Civil Litigation	21

SLP CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Average Age	73	Hispanic	11%
Average Annual Income	\$25,133	Asian	8%
White	57%	Disabled	37%
Black	22%		



CLIENT STORIES

*names have been changed for privacy**

Jared* is a 66-year-old that was told he had to move out of his home by the relative of his recently deceased landlord. Jared was terrified because he has various health issues and would not be able to move without great difficulty, especially with little time to do so. SLP Staff Attorney Nik Nikci advised him that he cannot be evicted without going through the eviction process. If he is not able to locate new housing quickly due to his health issues, going through the proper eviction process would allow for some additional time to make arrangements.

To Jared's great relief, he was informed that he could not be physically removed from the property without proper process and notice. Jared also expressed a desire to purchase the home from the relative now that his landlord had passed away. However, during the conversation it became apparent that he could not confirm that this relative had legally acquired ownership of the property.

Jared was shocked because he had not even questioned whether ownership had passed to the relative making the unsupported demands for his removal. Nik advised Jared not to provide any purchase funds to the relative without verifying ownership, which our client had come very close to doing.

Understanding his legal rights and how to avoid possibly being taken advantage of, as well as being summarily thrown out of his home, brought great relief to Jared.



CLIENT STORIES

Cassandra*, an 82-year-old widow, came to SLP accompanied by the Director of a local senior center. The Director was familiar with SLP due to our community outreach activities and knew we would be the right resource to help Cassandra when she shared with him her alarm regarding the behavior of her nephew and his misuse of a forged Power of Attorney. Her nephew had contacted her bank and taken money out, as well as contacting her insurance, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and had even manipulated her prescriptions. Cassandra was fearful of taking her medication and felt distraught and helpless as her nephew was also threatening to place her in a mental facility if she did not cooperate.

SLP Senior Staff Attorney Carol Kingman immediately created a Revocation of Powers of Attorney and after Cassandra signed it, we provided her with multiple copies. The Director of the senior center then personally took her to her bank and all pertinent agencies to notify them of the Revocation and flag her accounts for any suspicious activity.

Additionally, SLP wrote a letter to her nephew supplying him with a copy of the Revocation and informing him that he must cease and desist from all use of any documents in his possession. The attorney's letter also demanded the return of all her paperwork, prescriptions, possessions, etc. immediately and warned that further improper actions towards our client could warrant elevated responses from law enforcement.

Cassandra let someone know she was in trouble and with the help of her community and SLP we were able to give her peace of mind and control of her life back.



CLIENT STORIES

Henry* (75) and **Mariela*** (77) hired a contractor to install new windows and doors at their home for a total cost of \$34,000. Pursuant to the terms of the contract, the total price would be financed in two parts through a finance company. After completion of the construction project, the construction company refused to process the final payment through the finance company.

In lieu of complying with the contract terms, the construction company sent multiple letters to the couple threatening to place a lien on their home and seeking to foreclose. The couple said, “We went to other agencies, and they wouldn’t help us.” Then they found SLP.

After reviewing the documentation, Senior Staff Attorney Chelsea Crowton entered into several discussions with the finance company and the construction company.

SLP pointed out the illegality of the construction company placing a lien/foreclosure and filed a complaint with the finance company against the construction company.

The couple had previously attempted to reach the construction company for several months to no avail. After only a few days, SLP was able to negotiate with the construction company, who promptly relented, processed the final payment with the finance company, and to the great relief of our clients, confirmed that any threats of a contractor’s lien were rescinded.



CLIENT STORIES

Emilio* is a 66-year-old Social Security recipient who worked as a cabinet maker for most of his life. He was making a good living, but in 2022 decided he needed to take his Social Security so he could have more time to take care of his ailing wife. Unfortunately, she passed away shortly thereafter. After her death, he was just getting by on his Social Security, and was quite shocked to find a letter from Social Security in his mailbox one day stating that his benefits were stopping immediately. The letter cited that he was imprisoned and not currently entitled to Social Security.

A little while later, another letter arrived from his Medicare Advantage provider, stating that due to his imprisonment he was no longer entitled to Medicare coverage. The only problem was that not only was Emilio not currently imprisoned, but he never had been imprisoned, or even arrested. It appeared that someone in a Texas prison had obtained his Social Security number.

Emilio went to Social Security to try to resolve the matter. In addition to the obvious fact that he was not in prison, he showed them additional information he'd received from the Texas Department of Corrections showing a different birth date from the prisoner and that their names were different in several ways. Social Security was unable to resolve the matter, but a clerk made some entries in his computer and stated that he would appeal the matter for Emilio. It is not clear what the clerk did, and no copy of anything was given to Emilio, who also followed up with the Texas Department of Corrections and other agencies, seeking a letter or other proof to show Social Security that he was not the person in prison. However, he was told by them that they could be of no assistance.

Emilio then contacted SLP and Staff Attorney Jeff Arlitz reviewed the matter. Jeff was not able to find any record of an appeal being filed with Social Security and so filed a Request for Reconsideration to appeal the denial of benefits. The appeal contained multiple exhibits showing that the imprisoned person is not our client, and that this must be a case of identity theft. Emilio expressed his appreciation for the actions of SLP and left our office feeling hopeful that this appeal will resolve the matter and his critically needed Social Security benefits and Medicare insurance will soon resume. If not resolved, he will reach out to SLP for the help he knows we will provide him.



GOALS FOR 2024

Increase the number of at-risk older adults served by SLP through direct legal assistance and through educational community outreach.

Expand the Senior Advocates Pro Bono Program by adding a Director of Pro Bono Program who will recruit new volunteer attorneys and assist in retaining current volunteer attorneys, including Spanish speaking attorneys.

Grow the number of Hispanic older adults served by SLP to align more closely with the percentage of the Southern Nevadans of Hispanic heritage.

Reduce the wait time for a vulnerable senior to have an appointment with a SLP staff attorney.

Seek additional financial support to add capacity in carrying out our mission of *Empowering seniors in Southern Nevada through no-cost, quality legal services.*
