

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia



Report to the Commonwealth and the General Assembly FY 03-04



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Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

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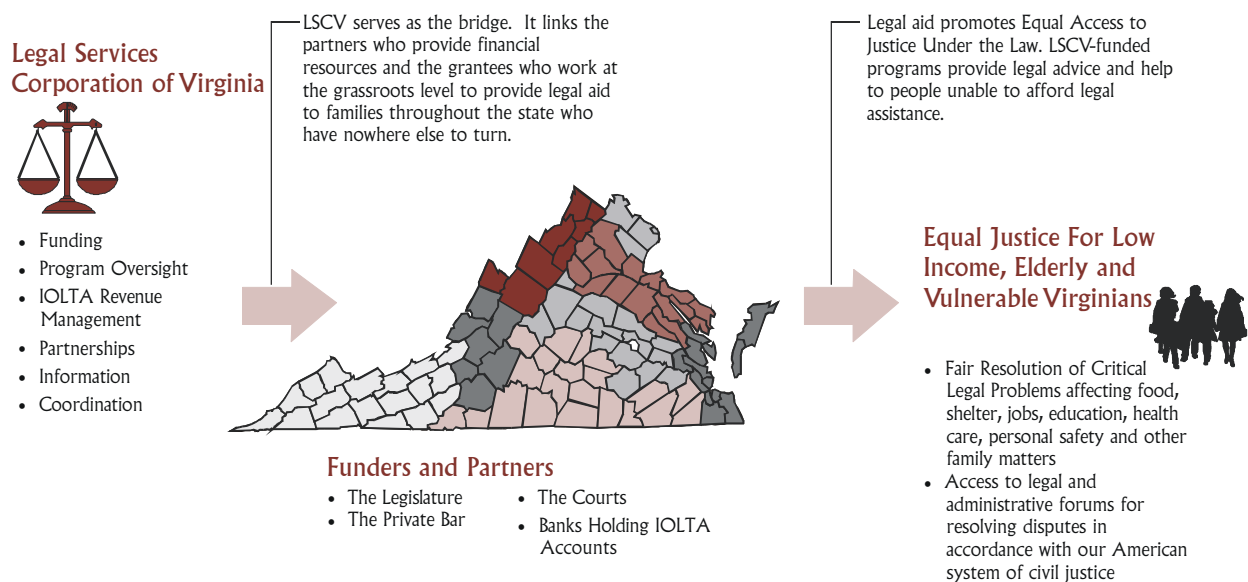
Preface

The Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

The Legal Services Corporation of Virginia provides funding, oversight and coordination for a statewide network of community-based organizations that provide civil legal assistance for low-income Virginians.

About the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

The Legal Services Corporation of Virginia (LSCV) is the principal funder for civil legal aid programs in Virginia.



LSCV was created in 1975 by the Virginia State Bar, the Virginia Department of Social Services and the Virginia Legal Aid Association to promote the development and coordination of legal aid programs in Virginia that help the poorest and most vulnerable people in Virginia to obtain help with legal problems affecting their most basic needs, such as food, shelter, jobs and access to health care.

LSCV generates and distributes funds for civil justice programs

In FY 03-04, LSCV grants supported ten regional legal aid programs and a statewide support center that collectively serve every community in Virginia. These programs completed a significant restructuring process in 2002 as part of a statewide strategic planning effort that began in 1998 to expand client access, improve outcomes for clients and promote greater efficiency in the delivery of services.

LSCV receives funding from the Virginia General Assembly in the form of general revenue and special filing fee appropriations and from the Virginia Interest On Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program that LSCV began administering in 1995.

Legal aid programs apply for funds and report to LSCV on their use on an annual basis. They are evaluated by LSCV to determine the quality and quantity of services provided. LSCV also provides program oversight and administers and coordinates benefits and other administrative matters for local programs.

In FY 03-04, LSCV distributed \$7.12 million in funding for Legal Services programs.

IOLTA funds: \$2.96 million. In 1995, LSCV began administration of Virginia's IOLTA program after its conversion from a mandatory to an opt-out program. Although attorneys are not required to participate, LSCV's recruitment efforts have resulted in over 4,300 IOLTA accounts, as many as existed under the mandatory program. Recognizing the charitable nature of the program, participating banks have become full partners in LSCV's efforts to serve the poor, lowering service charges and fees and sometimes paying slightly higher interest rates on IOLTA accounts than ordinary business checking accounts. Many banks waive service charges and fees and others charge nominal fees. As a result, LSCV's IOLTA revenue provides over 40 percent of the funds distributed to its grantees.

State funds: \$4.16 million. LSCV receives funding to provide civil legal services to Virginia's low income population from the Virginia General Assembly in the form of general revenue [\$1.61 million] and special filing fee appropriations [\$2.55 million].

For more information about LSCV and its programs, please visit our Web site at: www.valegalaid.org.

Introduction

The civil legal aid programs funded by the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia help the poorest and most vulnerable citizens in Virginia obtain assistance with legal problems affecting their most basic needs.

In FY 03-04, legal aid programs addressed 33,890 legal problems that met LSCV’s definition of a “case,” helping 81,222 low-income Virginians overcome the devastating personal impacts of domestic violence, threatened eviction from their homes, unemployment, denial of disability benefits and other emergencies thanks to the successful legal representation they received from LSCV grantees.

Another 48,443 people received community legal education, assistance with self-representation in court and other essential legal services. These low-income people, who had nowhere else to turn, were provided with the level of expert help they needed to address critical legal problems affecting their shelter, food, jobs, and access to health care.

The pro bono efforts of private lawyers served 4,131 clients and their families. Private attorneys donated over 19,400 hours, worth \$2.9 million*, through their participation in organized pro bono programs operated by legal aid organizations in partnership with local bar associations.

Legal aid programs improve the justice system for all.

- They provide access to justice and fight for fairness through legal representation and assistance to economically disadvantaged families in every county in Virginia.
- They enable people who need legal help but cannot hire a lawyer to act effectively and responsibly to settle their legal problems within the established justice system – as members, not victims, of society.
- In the vast majority of situations, they resolve legal problems without litigation. Legal aid advocates seek solutions that are fair, efficient, and consistent with our society’s commitment to Equal Justice Under the Law.

This Report At a Glance

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* Estimated conservatively at \$150 per hour.

Results of Direct Legal Assistance: Fair Solutions to Critical Legal Problems for Vulnerable Virginians

Direct legal assistance is the core service of LSCV grantees.

LSCV-funded legal aid advocates provide free legal help to people who live at or near the poverty level. They perform intake and provide advice and brief legal assistance on an increasingly centralized, regional basis with the help of sophisticated phone systems and database technology. Clients needing more in-depth assistance are referred to legal aid attorneys and paralegals working out of program offices located in cities and towns throughout the state, or to private attorneys who serve these clients on a pro bono basis out of their own law offices.

As the graph below indicates, 85 percent of the people benefiting from legal assistance in FY 03-04 had problems in four broad categories: Family, Housing, Consumer, and Income Maintenance.

LSCV Grantees Obtained \$21.8 Million in Benefits for Clients in FY 03-04.

• Social Security, SSI Benefits:	\$11,218,646
• Other Federal Benefits:	\$370,891
• Unemployment Compensation:	\$489,666
• Family Law - Child Support:	\$4,700,697
• Family Law - Alimony:	\$456,785
• Affirmative Judgements:	\$3,323,244
• Other Benefits:	\$1,194,430

Total includes back awards and 3 year total of monthly benefits, estimated over 6 months unemployment compensation), 12 months (other federal benefits, food stamps, alimony, affirmative judgments and other benefits) or 36 months (Social Security, SSI and child support).

81,222 People Benefited From Direct Representation

Family: 32,584 People

Legal problems include domestic violence, child support, divorce, child custody, parental rights and guardianships.

40%

Housing: 15,856 People

Legal problems include unlawful eviction, denial of access to public or government-subsidized housing, and illegal mortgage foreclosure.

20%

Consumer: 15,389 People

Legal problems include illegal taking of property, wage garnishment, denial of credit and fraudulent consumer practices.

19%

Income Maintenance: 5,595 People

Legal problems include eligibility for or termination of SSD (disability), SSI (Supplemental Security), unemployment compensation or public benefits.

7%

Other: 11,798 People

Legal problems include education, employment, juvenile, health, and individual rights.

15%

Direct legal assistance helps people who have nowhere else to turn.

The priority of LSCV-funded programs is to help families who, without legal assistance, would lose a critical human need, such as food, shelter, income, family stability, medical care, or personal safety. The following examples illustrate the results of that work.

Domestic violence: Help to victims seeking to build new lives

- With funding from a US Department of Justice grant, *Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley* provided outreach to domestic violence victims in Franklin, Bedford, and Craig counties. During the year, 173 clients were either referred to appropriate agencies or represented by one of two DOJ attorneys.
- *Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society* was able to assist individuals in 624 domestic violence cases in 2003-2004. Special funding enabled staff and pro bono attorneys to obtain protective orders against their clients' assailants as well as broach additional family matters that arise in the wake of domestic violence. This allowed more women the opportunity to take control of their lives.



Representative Cases

- **Safety for a mother and her children.** "Clarice" came to Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley hoping to escape a relationship of constant physical violence and verbal abuse by a husband who was also abusing their three children. A long-term protective order obtained on Clarice's behalf provided for the husband's removal from the home and gave her the opportunity to create an independent life as she was granted custody of the children, spousal and child support, and the husband was ordered to pay the mortgage on the home. Clarice and her children can now live free of violence and fear.
- **Protection from a violent husband.** "Maria," a 26-year-old mother with a one-year-old daughter, turned to Blue Ridge Legal Services for protection from her abusive husband. She had recently suffered a concussion from her husband's violence. An emergency protective order was issued, and following a contested hearing, the Court granted a long-term protective order, prohibiting the husband from committing further acts of violence against Maria and having any contact with her. She was granted temporary custody of her daughter. The husband received supervised visitation and was ordered to attend Alcoholics Anonymous and psychological counseling.

Children: Help in escaping the cycle of poverty

Representative Case

- **A child is placed in an appropriate educational environment.**

At a young age, "Jonathan" required neurosurgery which resulted in developmental delays and slowed his fine motor development. As a toddler, Jonathan qualified for SSI benefits, but when he turned seven, his parents contacted Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society for help with preserving his benefits and obtaining an appropriate education for their son. After repeating kindergarten and receiving failing grades during his first year of school, the school system still refused to evaluate him for special education until he was older. SWVLAS arranged for a hearing during which Jonathan's hyperactivity became apparent, and a special education evaluation was then requested. Jonathan now receives appropriate special education services as he has completed first grade successfully. His SSI benefits were continued, and the income makes a big difference to this large family.

- *Virginia Legal Aid Society* used print as a medium to reach parents and guardians regarding their children. Along with updating editions of existing client education materials, VLAS published a booklet called "Strengthening Families with Children."
- *Legal Aid Justice Center* was extensively involved with community organizations. LAJC assisted in the formation of Petersburg Advocates for Children as well as coordinating monthly meetings. This group of citizens, mostly parents with roles of advocate or community activist, is concerned about their children's school system. LAJC conducts legal and advocacy education workshops for parents.



People with disabilities: Leveling the playing field and promoting independence

- In 2003-2004, *Central Virginia Legal Aid Society* obtained over a quarter million dollars in desperately needed back due benefits for disabled clients. These individuals had been mistakenly and wrongfully denied Supplemental Security Income from the federal government and were living in miserable conditions as a result. CVLAS successfully restored these individuals to the living conditions to which they are entitled.
- *Virginia Poverty Law Center* effectively increased participation of area dentists in the Medicaid program by challenging legislation carving dental services out of the Medicaid managed care plan. This increased access to dental services. VPLC also successfully advocated for funding for Olmstead initiatives, allowing more disabled individuals to receive Medicaid health services in the community rather than institutions.



Representative Cases

- **Health care and income for a severely ill man.**
"Antonio," who suffers from AIDS, Hepatitis C, and other serious health problems, received help from Legal Services of Northern Virginia when the Social Security Administration denied his application for disability benefits. The Judge found Antonio to have been disabled as of June 29, 2001, which was a crucial finding as he had been hospitalized on June 30th and accrued a \$10,000 hospital bill. As a result of the favorable decision, Medicaid covered the bill, and Antonio received \$17,500 in retroactive disability benefits, enabling him to afford basic necessities such as shelter, food, and continued health care.
- **Quality health care for a cancer survivor**
"Tomica," a mentally and physically disabled woman, sought help from the Legal Aid Justice Center when her Medicaid coverage was threatened. She had been receiving full coverage Medicaid under a special category for recipients diagnosed with cervical or breast cancer but, after one year, was asked to prove continuing treatment. Her oncologist had relocated and, given her medical condition, she was unable to navigate her way through the verification process. LAJC called her physicians and helped Tomica obtain the necessary proof which got her Medicaid reinstated. She can now afford the medication and specialists necessary to treat her cancer.

Seniors: Fair solutions to critical issues affecting health, shelter and safety

- In 2002, *Blue Ridge Legal Services*, along with Area Agencies on Aging, was able to fund an Elderly Services Paralegal to serve as facilitator of the Friends and Relatives of Nursing Home Residents. In 2003, with funding from the Gannett Foundation, the Virginia Law Foundation, additional new funding from the United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham Counties, and the United Way of Greater Augusta County, a new part-time Elderly Services Attorney position was created in Harrisonburg. This attorney has combined experience of 15 years as a legal services attorney, public defender, and administrative law judge.
- The *Legal Aid Justice Center's* Charlottesville elder law attorney organized the Community Partnership for Improved Long-Term Care, a citizen advocacy group comprised of doctors, lawyers, nurses, ombudsman, and others with experience or backgrounds related to nursing home issues. The group strives to educate and empower those who work with the elderly population. Piedmont Area Regional Family Council, a group comprised of loved ones of nursing home residents, was formed as a result of the efforts of the Community Partnership.



Representative Cases

- **Keeping a grandmother safe from violence.**
After transferring her home to a granddaughter who agreed to provide "Juanita" with care, this 75-year-old turned to Blue Ridge Legal Services when she became a victim of family violence. The granddaughter had mortgaged the home, stolen the key to Juanita's lockbox, and was helping herself to her grandmother's cash. When Juanita's doctor noticed bruises, he reported the abuse. BRLS secured a protective order on behalf of Juanita and had the deed transfer set aside. The granddaughter was charged with assault and battery and robbery. Juanita is now living in a safe environment with her son.
- **Affordable housing for an elderly woman.**
When a landlord became dissatisfied with the housekeeping of his 67-year-old tenant, he threatened legal action. To avoid possible eviction, "Sara" moved. She was then sued for \$1,081.21 in damages allegedly caused in the apartment, as well as \$270.30 in attorney's fees and court costs. The Senior Law Center of Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia represented Sara in court. She refused the offer of a settlement and, eventually, the landlord's attorney non-suited the case. Sara has now obtained senior housing where she pays much less in rent.

People with housing problems: Keeping families in safe, decent, affordable shelter

Representative Cases

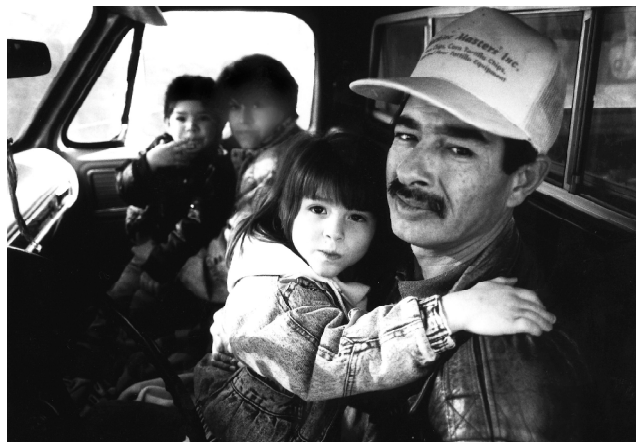
- **Keeping a family in their home.**

The "Villa" family signed a contract to purchase a house, agreeing to make monthly payments and pay taxes and insurance over a ten year period. They made extensive renovations to the wiring and plumbing and stayed current with all payments. After a year, the seller decided not to abide by the terms of the contract and proceeded to evict the family. After the Judge ordered the eviction, the Villas contacted Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society who helped them appeal their case to the Circuit Court where the eviction was overturned. The family continues to reside in their home with the provisions of the contract in force.

- **Preventing a mortgage foreclosure of a young woman's home.**

"Melanie" fell behind in her mortgage payments after losing her job. She received a foreclosure notice after missing two payments. When she found a new job, she turned to Virginia Legal Aid Society who negotiated a payment plan with the mortgage company. Melanie is now back on her feet and current on her payments. With the help of VLAS, Melanie was able to stay in her own home, and the foreclosure was averted.

- *Virginia Legal Aid Society* continues to advocate for the Liberty View Tenants' Association in their efforts to ensure tenants are getting the services required during the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority's removal of public housing and rebuilding of houses and rental units. VLAS wants to ensure tenants have a chance to move, attend tenant meetings, and resolve complaints with the Housing Authority.
- *Rappahannock Legal Services* engaged in ongoing advocacy on behalf of low-income residents to persuade the City of Fredericksburg and the surrounding counties to establish a regional housing authority to better address the issue of affordable housing in Planning District 16.
- During 2003-2004, *Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley* provided continuing counsel to a public housing tenants' group, negotiating for improved administration by the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority. When appropriate, LASRV also enlists the services of Tenants Building Bridges, the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Council, and tenant councils at the Roanoke Housing Authority.



Empowerment: *LSCV Grantees Help People to Help Themselves*

In addition to providing direct legal assistance that benefited more than 81,000 people in FY 03-04, legal aid advocates helped 48,443 additional people to understand and act upon their legal rights and responsibilities as tenants, parents, employees, spouses, and consumers. (See sidebar at right.) For this, LSCV-funded programs used three powerful strategies: telephone legal “hotlines,” pro se (self-help) assistance, and community legal education.

Telephone legal “hotlines:” Providing expert legal advice that can prevent small problems from becoming big ones.

- The *Blue Ridge Legal Services* hotlines are essential in providing community access to legal services. At the Winchester office, an intake paralegal screens for eligibility, case type, and conflicts and provides advice or referral with assistance of a managing attorney. The Harrisonburg hotline is staffed by an intake paralegal and student interns. These calls are screened, and services are provided by the "attorney of the day." The Roanoke office operates in conjunction with the Virginia Bar Association. Thirty plus attorneys volunteer to return calls on a rotating basis. They are able to provide advice on poverty law issues, relying on a Handbook specially prepared for this purpose.
- *Legal Services of Northern Virginia* continues its relationship with *Potomac Legal Aid Society*, a hotline advice program. LSNV and PLAS cooperate in making mutual referrals, with LSNV referring many persons in need of immediate legal advice to PLAS and PLAS referring persons who need more extended legal assistance to LSNV. This approach has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of low-income Northern Virginia residents receiving legal assistance.

Summary: Information and Self-Help Assistance	
	People and Families Benefited
Legal information brochures and materials	12,678
Community legal education workshops and presentations	7,887
Direct assistance to self-represented litigants	312
Other (includes materials posted on websites)	27,566
Total	48,443



Self-help assistance: Empowering people to solve simple legal problems themselves.

- *Rappahannock Legal Services* and *Potomac Legal Aid Society* are currently engaged in joint projects to provide both pro se divorce and pro se housing clinics in RLS' three office service areas. RLS and PLAS have already met with the 11 circuit court judges in the RLS service area to coordinate the design and implement the pro se divorce project. RLS also completed a rewrite of its 2001 Guide to Virginia Landlord Tenant Law and Local Rental Housing and distributed it through community housing forums.
- *Blue Ridge Legal Services* continues to coordinate the "legal checkup" program for new residents of a nearby homeless shelter that has developed a rigorous self-help program, utilizing volunteer private attorneys and a comprehensive set of legal checklists. As problems are identified, they are referred back to BRLS staff, or other volunteer private attorneys, as appropriate, for further assistance.

Community legal education: Informing people about their rights and responsibilities in everyday situations.

- As a result of outreach and training by Virginia Poverty Law Clinic, hundreds of low-income individuals throughout Virginia have received training, materials, and applications for health care coverage after learning of their rights to Medicaid and/or the Children's Health Insurance Program (FAMIS).
- *Legal Aid Justice Center's* JustChildren programs provided workshops to public housing residents, low-income families, Special Education Advisory Committees (Charlottesville and Albemarle), the Kids Now! Campaign: Virginians for Educational Fairness, the Petersburg Advocates for Children, students at the Adult Education Center, and other groups, reaching a total of approximately 150 people. Topics included children's rights, special education, peer support for other families of children with disabilities, public speaking, working with the media, choosing priority issues, etc.
- *Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia* conducted a total of 29 workshops in various venues throughout all of Eastern Virginia on wills, powers of attorney, and advanced medical directives, targeted primarily to seniors.

Economic Results:

More Income for Families and Communities

LSCV grantees produce millions in benefits for needy families.

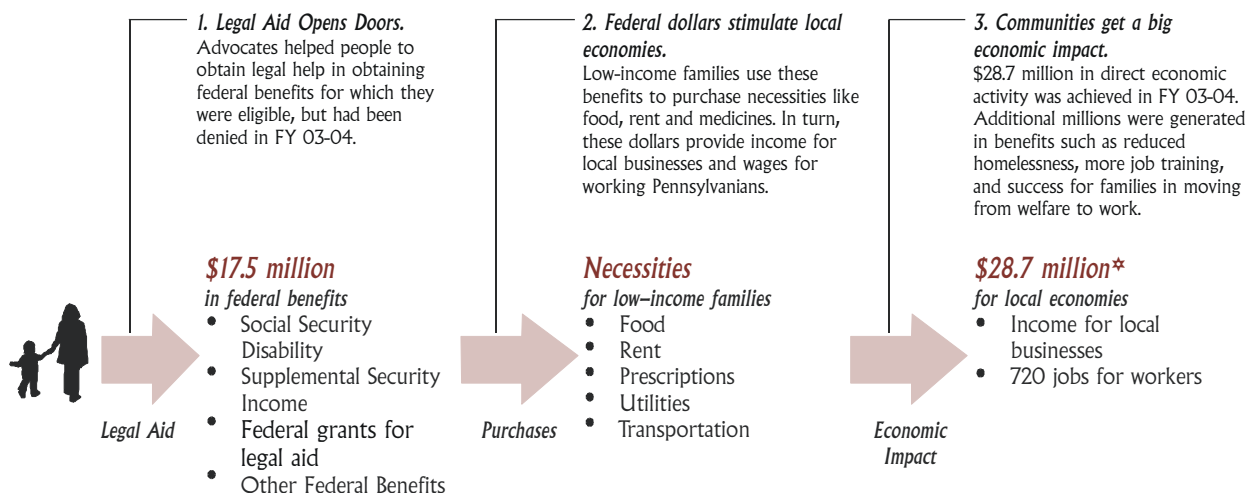
From the purely economic standpoint of dollars generated per dollar invested, the performance of legal aid advocates is outstanding. In FY 03-04, for example, Virginia legal aid advocates won an estimated \$21.8 million in direct benefits for their clients, including child support and alimony payments, Social Security and Social Security Disability benefits, worker's compensation insurance payments, and other critically needed forms of financial support and relief for which clients were legally eligible but had been denied. (See page 1 for a summary of these benefits.)

LSCV grantees bring dollars into the economies of the communities they serve.

Federal benefits such as Supplemental Security Income not only help the direct recipients but also flow immediately into the local economy to generate additional income and jobs that otherwise would be lost for Virginians.

In FY 03-04, LSCV-funded legal aid advocates obtained \$11.2 million in federal benefits for which low-income Virginians were legally eligible but had been denied. These funds, combined with more than \$6.3 million in federal grant funds received for legal aid programs' own operating support, flowed directly into local communities in the form of salaries, rent, goods and services purchased from local businesses. This resulted in new economic activity and additional jobs in local communities, as shown in the graphic below. By applying a standard economic activity multiplier of 1.64 (obtained from U.S. Department of Commerce "Regional Economic Multiplier" studies), we can produce a reliable estimate of \$28.7 million in new economic activity and 720 jobs resulting from these benefits and grants.

Economic Impact



*Total impact was estimated by applying the universally-accepted U.S. Department of Commerce "Regional Economic Multiplier" for payments to low-income families in Virginia. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce "Regional Economic Multiplier" studies, each million dollars brought into Virginia from outside the state circulates through local economies 1.64 times and supports 25 jobs.

Quality and Productivity: *LSCV Grantees Maximize Results Per Dollar*

Quality: LSCV grantees deliver quality through well-trained advocates and partners.

Advocates throughout the legal aid system have access to LSCV-funded special programs and projects. Lawyers in the programs funded by LSCV often lend their expertise as partners, trainers and mentors to advocates across the state in addressing special legal issues or opportunities arising in local contexts. For example, in FY 03-04:

- *Virginia Poverty Law Center* sponsored a two-day Substantive Training for New Lawyers and provided training on elder law issues at the Virginia Bar Association's winter meeting, on Medicaid at the Virginia Guardianship Association/Elder Rights Coalition Annual Conference, and on Immigrants Right to Public Benefits for CHIP of Richmond. In addition, VPLC co-sponsored a series of four regional trainings in Northern Virginia, Tidewater, Richmond, and Harrisonburg on the "High Cost of Being Poor."

Productivity: LSCV-funded programs maximize results for clients.

High performance standards are demonstrated through rigorous evaluation. All grantees are reviewed annually by LSCV using data from a comprehensive, statewide reporting system implemented in 1997.

LSCV grantees track measurable outcomes. LSCV has been a leader in the field of helping legal aid organizations apply outcomes measurement systems to provide critical tools for ensuring the highest standards of quality, accessibility, and effectiveness for the legal work performed on behalf of low-income people across the state of Virginia. Within programs, outcomes measurement provides invaluable feedback on performance; externally, it allows individual programs and the statewide legal aid community as a whole to assess the impact legal aid is having on low-income individuals and families and their critical needs.

Legal aid advocates apply the latest information technology.

- During 2003-2004, *Blue Ridge Legal Services* developed an avenue to utilize its case management software to effectively distribute surveys, record the responses, analyze the data, and report on the results of their community client satisfaction assessment. When surveys are returned, BRLS compiles the results by staff person, locality, funding source, time period, or any other variable tracked in the case management system. As the system has been implemented for nearly a full year, a 12% response rate is being observed. Positive feedback is regularly shared with the entire office staff via e-mail. The system has proven to be comprehensive, inexpensive, and highly automated, and the resulting data is readily accessible by any number of variables.
- *Virginia Legal Aid Society* stepped up its training efforts in light of emerging technological advances. Throughout 2003-2004, staff, board, and volunteers received the following:
 - MicroSoft Exchange software training
 - WebEx training
 - Online computer training modules for Outlook, Word, and Excel on the Intranet
 - Individualized training on computer issues for each new employee by the Systems Manager
 - National Technology Assistance Project WebEx trainings on centralized intake, I-CAN, and GIS mapping



Partnerships:

LSCV–Funded Programs Promote Solutions to Community–Wide Problems

The pro bono involvement of private lawyers is a crucial element of the legal aid delivery system.

With leadership from the Virginia State Bar and local bar associations across the state, the pro bono contributions of private lawyers are key elements of efforts to provide access to the justice system for low-income Virginians. The following are some examples of accomplishments reported by LSCV-funded programs in FY 03-04.

- Over twenty volunteer attorneys have agreed to assist victims of domestic violence by accepting referrals from *Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society*. More than 10% of private attorneys in the region participated in private attorney involvement projects supported by SWVLAS. In 2003-2004, these attorneys donated 400 pro bono hours in addition to providing another 1,260 hours of service to legal aid clients on a significantly reduced fee basis.

Pro bono statistics

In FY 03-04, volunteer lawyers participating in LSCV-funded programs achieved the following results.

Number of cases completed	4,131
Hours contributed	19,491
Dollar value of services*	\$2.9 million

*Estimated conservatively at \$150 per hour

- Legal Aid Justice Center's* Housing Panel in Richmond, has 30 attorneys routinely volunteering. Twice a week, two to three attorneys visit the office and accept case referrals. LAJC has received a grant from the Robins Foundation to undertake a significant pro bono project in Richmond and is currently exploring an opportunity for funding from a major law firm to underwrite the cost of an additional attorney position

Partnerships with the private bar promote synergy.

- In a joint venture with the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar Association, *Legal Services of Northern Virginia's* hotline consists of a rotating panel of about 50 pro bono attorneys. LSNV provides the training and reference materials for the attorneys prior to their involvement. LSNV staff screen clients for eligibility and schedule call backs by a volunteer attorney. The attorneys contact three to five clients in an afternoon, giving counsel and advice in family and housing areas. An LSNV attorney oversees the hotline during its operation, being available for consultation with the pro bono hotline attorney.
- During the year, *Central Virginia Legal Aid Society* complimented direct legal services to its low-income community by providing training and legal education for private bar attorneys in the areas of housing, employment, consumer, family, and poverty law.

Legal Aid programs promote solutions to community wide problems.

Increasingly, collaboration between legal aid programs is becoming a critical element of the statewide justice system, complementing the work that programs do themselves within their own client communities. Collaboration creates synergies, leverages scarce resources more effectively, promotes innovation and the sharing of knowledge and ideas, and often generates new solutions to critical issues facing the low-income community. Examples of collaborative efforts undertaken by LSCV-funded grantees in FY 03-04 include:

- *Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley* worked jointly with several organizations throughout the community on a variety of levels. LASRV domestic violence attorneys participated in or coordinated with the Roanoke Family Violence Coordinating Council, the Women's Resource Center Commission, the Franklin County Women's Resource Center, and the Bedford County Domestic Violence Services. LASRV general counsel has participated in a valley-wide group working to improve the judicial system's response to abused and neglected children. LASRV staff regularly respond to requests for client service originating not only from the courts and social services, but also from private and community organizations such as NAACP, Tenants Building Bridges, and Women's Shelter.
- *Virginia Poverty Law Center* entered into several new collaborations and partnerships in 2003-2004. They are partnering with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy and the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, advocating for public benefits improvements. The Children's Health Coalition, along with a group of about 100 hospital associations, other advocacy groups, children's advocates, and church and consumer groups work with VPLC towards improving access to quality health care. In an effort to secure safe and affordable shelter for the low-income community, VPLC collaborates with the Virginia Housing Coalition, the Virginia Coalition for the Homeless, and other tenant associations and groups. Virginians Against Domestic Violence Network, Virginians Against Sexual Assault, and the Virginia State Bar share VPLC's commitment to stop domestic violence, and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia, joined by a group of about 45 other child advocacy organizations focus on child neglect prevention.
- Eastern Virginia Legal Aid Society (now part of *Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia*) continued to participate in functions of the Virginia Association of Housing and Community Development Officials (VAHCDO). EVLAS also presented a seminar on General District Court matters and procedures and housing/consumer matters to Naval Legal Services personnel at Norfolk Naval Base last summer and attended their Automobile Fraud seminar in the spring.

People:

The Most Powerful Asset of LSCV–Funded Programs

LSCV grantees employ dedicated people.

The principal asset of legal aid programs throughout Virginia is their core staff of experienced, committed legal aid professionals.

Staff include some of the leading poverty law experts in the nation.

Virginia legal aid advocates include leading regional and national innovators in areas such as community economic development, housing, disability law, domestic violence, consumer and employment law, and immigration. Many have dedicated their entire careers to the effort to ensure that the legal system provides equal justice for all, regardless of income, often at considerable sacrifice and with little fanfare.

As of the end of FY 03-04, LSCV grantees' staffs included:

- **128 attorneys.** Legal aid programs had a good mix of young and experienced attorneys, providing new ideas to season the knowledge and relationships maintained by a solid core of staff attorneys with many years' experience serving the low-income community.
- **51 paralegals.** Paralegal staff perform a vast range of functions including interviewing clients, doing legal research, preparing legal documents and representing clients in administrative proceedings under the guidance of attorneys. Many paralegals with Virginia legal aid programs have decades of experience and are highly skilled legal professionals in their own right.
- **104 other staff.** These included 46 secretarial-clerical staff and 58 management and professional staff, including social workers, pro bono coordinators, information technology specialists and other staff. These personnel provide crucial support to the legal staff within their programs, from staffing hotlines to performing intake and providing administrative assistance, and also perform critical ancillary functions that improve their organizations' services, increase their ability to serve clients, and strengthen their support and collaborations within the community.

LSCV is committed to training future leaders now.

During FY 03-04, LSCV engaged the Management Information Exchange (MIE, a national legal services training organization on management and fundraising issues) to help develop and sustain a leadership and diversity training module for our Virginia advocates that would provide our future legal aid program leaders with practical training in management issues, foster thinking about leadership regardless of position in the management hierarchy, foster better understanding of our co-workers' and clients' diversities and create litigation and legislative advocacy projects that training participants could bring back to their local and regional programs to implement for the direct benefit of their communities.

Funding:

More Dollars Are Needed to Fulfill the Promise of Equal Justice

Every person in America deserves full access to our civil justice system.

According to a recent Harris Poll, close to nine in ten Americans (89 percent) agree that legal help for civil matters should be provided for low-income people. Yet a huge gap prevents that vision from being realized. The American Bar Association has estimated that despite serving 1.9 million clients annually, the collective civil legal aid effort is meeting only 20 percent of the legal needs of low-income people.

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia and its grantees are working to close the funding gap. Legal aid advocates are joining with the courts, our state legislators, community leaders and with local businesses, banks and foundations to expand funding for legal aid.

Fact Sheet: The Need for Legal Aid

- **More than 800,000 residents of Virginia are living in poverty.** Despite relatively prosperous times, more than 650,000 people in our state are still living below the poverty level, and another 150,000 have incomes that are less than 125 percent of the federal poverty guideline. As a result, roughly one in eight Virginians are eligible for free civil legal services from LSCV grantees.
- **The need for legal services for the poor is overwhelming.** According to a 1994 study by the American Bar Association, 48 percent of low- and moderate-income households experience a legal problem each year. In Virginia, this translates to 400,000 legal problems annually.
- **People feel disenfranchised.** The ABA study showed that most low- and moderate-income people feel shut out from the legal system. They do not turn to the courts for solutions because they believe the system will not help them.
- **Civil legal aid ensures justice for all Americans regardless of their income.** Many people would otherwise not be able to afford access to the courts to resolve their legal troubles.

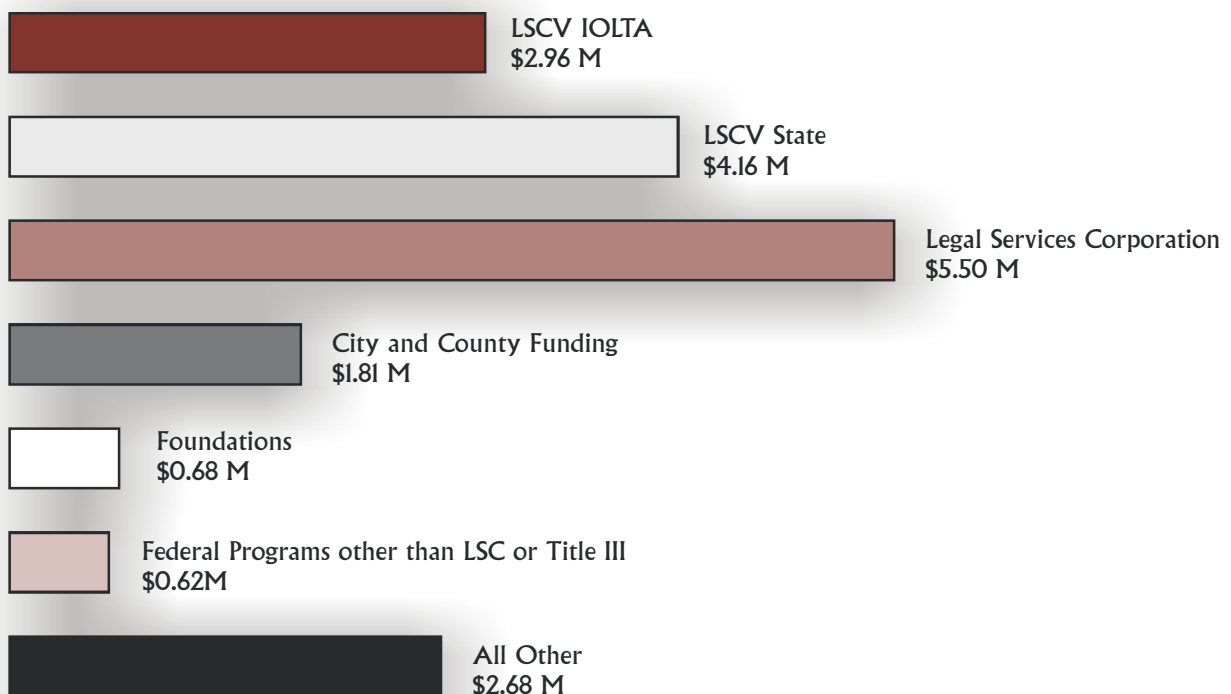
Increased funding from five major sources is the key to narrowing the gap.

The principal sources of funding for legal services programs are LSCV, LSC, city and county grants and an array of non-LSC Federal sources.

While LSCV and its grantees continue to seek new collaborations and sources of funding to expand their ability to meet the critical legal needs of the low-income communities they serve, fluctuations in their largest funding sources make this increasingly difficult. For example, historically low interest rates have caused LSCV IOLTA revenues to decline by over \$1 million in the past year. In addition, DOJ domestic violence grants declined by over \$2 million over the past two years. The need for additional funding for the work of legal aid advocates and their partners in the private bar has never been greater.

FY 03-04 Funding

Total: \$18.41 Million



Conclusion

Legal Aid programs funded by the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia further the goal of providing Equal Justice Under the Law.

Every dollar spent on legal aid for low-income Virginians yields a return to society far exceeding the investment. Funding for legal aid promotes fairness and equality, helps families in crisis secure access to safety net programs, saves dollars for taxpayers and generates economic activity in local communities providing income and jobs for working Virginians.

This commitment deserves the support of every citizen. A study by the American Bar Association has found that more than 80 percent of the civil legal needs of the poor are not being met. This is an unacceptable shortfall in our civil justice system.

Until the resources have been found to bridge the gap between the need for legal assistance and the capacity to provide it, “Equal Justice Under the Law” will remain an empty promise for many of our most vulnerable citizens. Fulfilling this promise is an investment that will pay the highest possible dividend for the future: *Equal Justice Under the Law!*

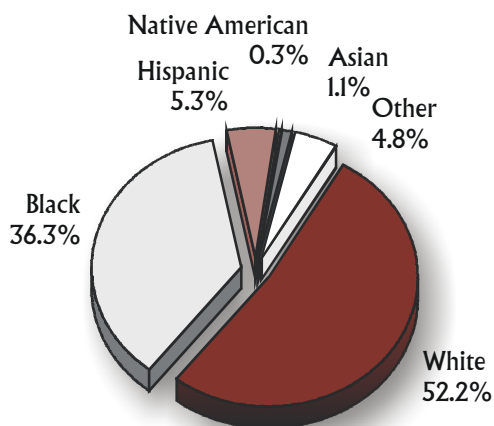
Appendix A: Case Statistics and Client Demographics

Case Statistics: Number of Closed Cases by Major Reason Closed

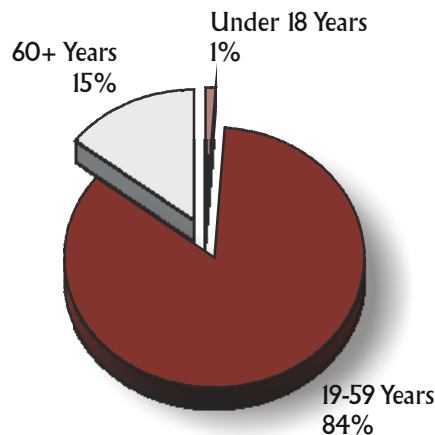
	Advice & Counsel	Brief Service	Referral	Negotiated without Litigation	Negotiated with Litigation	Admin. Agency Decision	Court Decision	Other	Grand Total
Blue Ridge Legal Services	2283	523	69	54	127	43	687	261	4,047
Central Virginia Legal Aid Society	3213	226	18	25	33	61	322	53	3,951
Eastern Virginia Legal Aid Society	1120	1376	222	39	27	46	90	351	3,271
Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley	933	121	45	18	21	12	96	84	1,330
Legal Aid Justice Center	520	388	21	138	105	94	401	3	1,670
Legal Services of Eastern Virginia	1437	154	0	13	14	117	348	80	2,163
Legal Services of Northern Virginia	2267	513	143	133	209	155	354	375	4,149
Potomac Legal Aid Society	1,870	200	592	1	2	0	2	153	2,820
Rappahannock Legal Services	598	197	35	42	61	102	205	150	1,390
Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society	4850	309	90	59	71	120	884	327	6,710
Virginia Legal Aid Society	1183	334	0	63	52	151	357	249	2,389
Virginia Poverty Law Center	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	20,274	4,341	1,235	585	722	901	3,746	2,086	33,890

Client Demographics

Ethnic Group



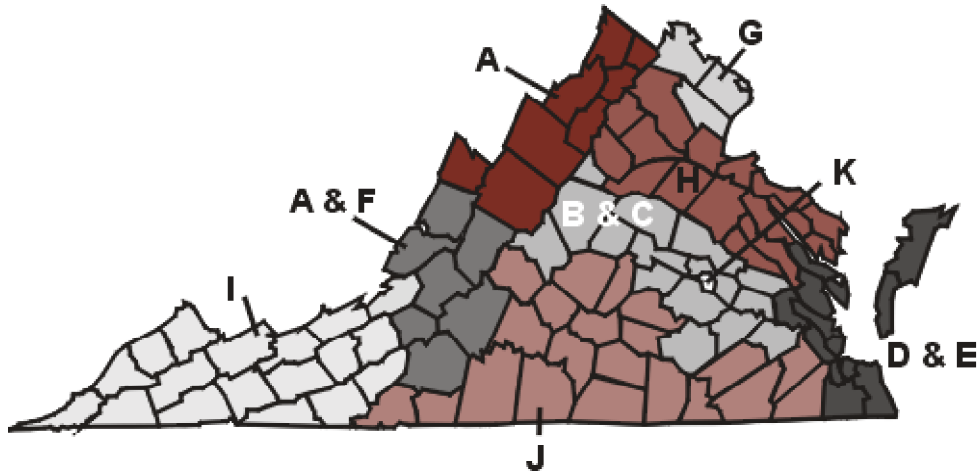
Age



Appendix B:

Local Legal Aid Programs Funded by Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

LSCV July, 2003 grant allocations shown in parentheses (additional one-time grants in varying amounts were also allocated for technology enhancements and leadership and diversity training).



- | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| A | Blue Ridge Legal Services (BRLS); Harrisonburg, Winchester, Roanoke, Lexington (\$372,396) | G | Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV); Falls Church, Alexandria, Fairfax, Leesburg, Manassas (\$834,937) |
| B | Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS); Richmond, Petersburg, Charlottesville (\$681,389) | H | Rappahannock Legal Services (RLS); Fredricksburg, Culpeper, Rappahannock (\$295,079) |
| C | Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC); Charlottesville, Petersburg, Richmond (\$353,147) | I | Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society (SWVLAS); Marion, Castlewood, Christiansburg (\$920,319) |
| D | Legal Services of Eastern Virginia (LSEV); Hampton, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, Belle Haven (\$350,000) | J | Virginia Legal Aid Society (VLAS); Lynchburg, Danville, Farmville, Emporia, Halifax, Suffolk (\$879,303) |
| E | Eastern Virginia Legal Aid Society (EVLAS); Norfolk, Hampton (\$1,108,657) | K | Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC); Richmond (Statewide Program) (\$527,653) |
| F | Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley (LASRV); Roanoke (\$356,767) | | |

Appendix C:

Outcomes Produced for Clients by LSCV-Funded Programs in FY 03-04

1. Dollar Benefits Achieved for Clients*

a. Back awards - total:	\$6,103,339
b. Monthly payments going forward - total per month:	\$598,778
c. One-year total, back awards plus assumed total of benefit stream:*	\$21,754,358

*See breakdown by type of benefit, Appendix D.

2. Major Non-Dollar Benefits Achieved for Clients

Benefits are listed below in decreasing order by number of people directly affected.

Category	Major Benefit Achieved	# of Cases	# People Directly Affected
<i>A. Major Benefit Was Achievement of a Legal Objective</i>			
Family	obtained a divorce or annulment	1,315	3,205
Family	obtained or maintained custody of children	706	2,375
Consumer	avoided or delayed utility termination	829	2,175
Housing	avoided, or obtained redress for, illegal or unfair charges by landlord	558	2,168
Family	obtained protection from domestic violence	437	1,325
Miscellaneous	obtained a living will and/or health proxy or power of attorney	1,035	1,242
Consumer	obtained federal bankruptcy protection	413	1,208
Income Maintenance	obtained, preserved or increased SSI benefit/right	368	1,114
Consumer	stopped or reduced debt collection activity	358	899
Miscellaneous	obtained a will	489	776
Housing	prevented eviction from other housing	221	622
Housing	prevented eviction from public housing	178	539
Miscellaneous	obtained representation in affirmative litigation	359	513
Family	obtained, preserved, or increased child support	117	466
Consumer	avoided or ended garnishment or levy	188	457
Income Maintenance	obtained, preserved or increased unemployment inst	172	434
Housing	delayed eviction providing time to seek alternative h	148	394
Family	obtained assistance in negotiating separation agreem	99	325
Income Maintenance	obtained, preserved or increased SSD benefit/right	126	304
All Problem Areas	Other, none of the above	3,396	7,326
<i>B. Major Benefit Was Access to Legal Information, Advice and/or Assistance From a Lawyer or Paralegal</i>			
All Problem Areas	Received legal advice & counsel	19,128	47,792
All Problem Areas	Received non-litigation advocacy services	1,136	2,602
All Problem Areas	Received referral to another agency	1,206	2,961
Total, All Cases:		32,982	81,222

Appendix D: Dollar Benefits, Breakdown by Type of Benefit

	<i>Back Awards a</i>	<i>Monthly Benefits b</i>	<i>Assumed Duration c</i>	<i>Total Benefits* d</i>
a. Social Security / SSI	\$2,480,981	\$242,713	36 months	\$11,218,646
b. Other Public Benefits	\$75,895	\$24,583	12 months	\$370,891
c. Unemployment Comp	\$239,694	\$41,662	6 months	\$489,666
d. Family Law				
(1) Child Support	\$364,875	\$120,440	36 months	\$4,700,697
(2) Alimony	\$223,769	\$19,418	12 months	\$456,785
3. All "Other" Types of Cases	\$2,718,125	\$149,962	12 months	\$4,517,674
Total:	\$6,103,339	\$598,778		\$21,754,358

* Total benefit includes back awards and total of monthly benefits over assumed duration of benefit stream (column "c").