

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia



Report to the Commonwealth and the General Assembly FY 2007-2008



Legal Services Corporation of Virginia
700 E. Main Street, Suite 1504
Richmond, VA 23219
804-782-9438
804-648-3917 (fax)

Legal information and
program descriptions on the Web at

www.valegalaid.org

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

Board of Directors FY 07-08

Steven D. Rosenthal (Richmond), *President*
Dale W. Pittman (Petersburg), *Vice President*
Jack L. Harris (Richmond), *Secretary-Treasurer*
William L. Lukhard (Manakin), *Immediate Past President*
Linda Berry (Richmond)
William L. Botts (Fredericksburg)
Judith Budd (Bowling Green)
Luis Perez (Falls Church)
Mark Rubin (Richmond)
Bosley Crowther (Palmyra)
Rita Davis (Richmond)
Karen Gould (Richmond)
John P. Ellis (Arlington)
Michael Herring (Richmond)
Larry Harley (Marion)
Terri Lynch (Arlington)
Janet James (Richmond)
Debra Grant (Virginia Beach)
John Whitfield (Staunton)
Joseph Spruill, III (Richmond)
Renae Patrick (Harrisonburg)

Management Team

Mark Braley, *Executive Director*
Barbara Williams, *Administrator*
Carolyn Lawrence, *IOLTA Coordinator*
Vanessa Nixon, *Executive Secretary*

*This report was produced for the Legal Services Corporation
of Virginia by The Resource for Great Programs, Inc.*

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

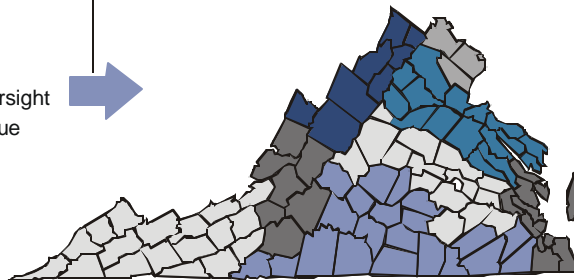
The Legal Services Corporation of Virginia (LSCV) is the principal funder for civil legal aid programs in Virginia.

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia



- Funding
- Program Oversight
- IOLTA Revenue Management
- Partnerships
- Information
- Coordination

LSCV serves as the bridge. It links the partners who provide financial resources and the grantees who work at the grassroots level to provide legal aid to families throughout the state who have nowhere else to turn.



Legal aid promotes Equal Access to Justice Under the Law. LSCV-funded programs provide legal advice and help to people unable to afford legal assistance.

Equal Justice For Low- Income, Elderly and Vulnerable Virginians

- Fair Resolution of Critical Legal Problems affecting food, shelter, jobs, education, health care, personal safety and other family matters
- Access to legal and administrative forums for resolving disputes in accordance with our American system of civil justice



Funders and Partners

- The Legislature
- The Courts
- The Private Bar
- Banks Holding IOLTA Accounts

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 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 07-08, LSCV grants supported nine regional legal aid programs and a statewide support center that, collectively, served every community via 38 offices located strategically throughout the state of Virginia. The current office structure was completed in 2002 after several years of strategic planning and restructuring. The statewide planning is intended to develop best practice models of service efficiency, and has already expanded client access and improved outcomes for clients.

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 annually to LSCV on their use. 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 07-08, LSCV distributed over \$8.97 million in funding for Legal Services programs.

IOLTA funds: \$3.95 million. In 1995, LSCV began administering 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 4,620 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 on 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 30 percent of the funds distributed to its grantees.

State funds: \$5.02 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 [\$2.0 million] and special filing fee appropriations [\$3.3 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 07-08, legal aid programs addressed 35,774 legal problems that met LSCV's definition of a "case," helping 89,202 low-income Virginians overcome the devastating personal impacts of domestic violence, threatened eviction, unemployment, denial of disability benefits and other emergencies.

Another 134,042 low-income people received community legal education, assistance with self-representation in court and other essential legal services, including referrals to other sources of non-legal assistance. These individuals were provided with the 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 3,244 clients and their families. Private attorneys donated over 11,700 hours, worth \$1.76 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 city and county in Virginia.
- They enable people who need legal help but cannot afford it 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

Introduction	1
Results of Direct Legal Assistance: <i>Fair Solutions to Critical Legal Problems for Vulnerable Virginians</i>	2
Empowerment: <i>LSCV Grantees Help People to Help Themselves</i>	8
Economic Results: <i>More Income for Families and Communities</i>	10
Quality and Productivity: <i>LSCV Grantees Maximize Results Per Dollar</i>	11
Partnerships: <i>LSCV-Funded Programs Promote Solutions to Community-wide Problems</i>	13
People: <i>The Most Powerful Asset of LSCV-Funded Programs</i>	15
Funding: <i>More Dollars Are Needed to Fulfill the Promise of Equal Justice</i>	16
Conclusion	18
Appendix A: <i>Case Statistics and Client Demographics</i>	19
Appendix B: <i>Local Legal Aid Programs Funded by Legal Services Corporation of Virginia</i>	20
Appendix C: <i>Outcomes Produced for Clients by LSCV-Funded Programs in FY 07-08</i>	21
Appendix D: <i>Dollar Benefits, Breakdown by Type of Benefit</i>	22

* 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 a 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.

As the graph below indicates, 88 percent of the people benefiting from legal assistance in FY 07-08 had problems in four broad categories: Family, Housing, Consumer and Income Maintenance.

LSCV Grantees Obtained \$15.9 Million in Benefits for Clients in FY 07-08.

Dollar Benefits Achieved for Clients - Total		\$15,953,655
● Social Security, SSI Benefits:		\$7,006,666
● Other Federal Benefits:		\$370,300
● Unemployment Compensation:		\$694,990
● Family Law - Child Support:		\$3,290,949
● Family Law - Alimony:		\$847,302
● Affirmative Judgements:		\$2,630,587
● Other Benefits:		\$1,112,861

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).

89,202 People* Benefited From Direct Representation

Family: 40,416 People

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

45%

Housing: 18,732 People

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

21%

Consumer: 13,252 People

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

15%

Income Maintenance: 5,781 People

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

7%

Other: 11,021 People

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

12%

*Individuals could be counted multiple times as some clients may have received more than one benefit as a result of the legal services they were provided.

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 for victims seeking to build new lives

- *Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society*, with the help of regional advisory committees, improved assistance to domestic violence victims by establishing better local coordination of services through joint trainings. SVLAS organized two regional conferences focusing on the connections between domestic violence and economics. The keynote speaker, whose research led to the Family Violence Option on federal welfare reform legislation, discussed how the lives of domestic violence victims are affected by and lead to poverty. Over 230 individuals attended these two conferences, including those in law enforcement, legal aid, shelter programs, prosecutors, educators, etc. The conferences became training opportunities for pro bono attorneys to provide legal services to victims.

Representative Case

Freedom from abuse and protection from homelessness

Gloria ended a violent relationship with her ex-boyfriend. He came to her home twice and Gloria called the police for assistance. Shortly thereafter, she received notice from the landlord that she was being evicted for "disruptive conduct," citing the two incidents of domestic violence directed at her. Blue Ridge Legal Services helped her obtain protections under the federal Violence Against Women Act, which prohibit a tenant from being evicted simply because she is the victim of domestic violence. In the process, the attorney educated the landlord on the rights of women leaving violent relationships. The eviction action was dropped and the landlord confirmed that the information would become part of her file.

Children: Help in escaping the cycle of poverty

- *Legal Aid Justice Center's* JustChildren Program plays a key role in helping members of the community become more vocal and effective advocates for children. LAJC provides advocacy materials, manages e-mail lists, and sends out legislative alerts. They conduct workshops that enable many low-income residents, as well as service providers, to engage in effective advocacy for public education. Program staff serve as watchdogs in the General Assembly, working to defeat bills that, while well-intentioned, would harm the educational prospects of Virginia's low-income students. JustChildren provided testimony and direct advocacy to support smart legislation seeking to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, and urged the Virginia Board of Education to promote policies that minimize the loss of instructional time for students with challenging behaviors.



Representative Case

Child receives rightful assistance

Three-year-old Robert has had an auto immune disorder since birth and was denied SSI benefits. His mother appealed the denial. At a hearing in October, the Administrative Law Judge told the mother she needed legal representation, and a new hearing was scheduled for late November. At this hearing, a Legal Services of Northern Virginia attorney was able to present a more complete picture of Robert's condition, other illnesses, repeated infections, and their disabling impact on his life. Robert received a "full favorable" decision two months later.

Housing: Preventing homelessness

- *Legal Services of Northern Virginia* created the Foreclosure Legal Assistance Project (FLAP), which provides a holistic approach on foreclosure and prevention, as well as outreach to low- to moderate-income homeowners who are struggling to keep their homes or are facing foreclosure. There are currently 17 housing counselors involved with FLAP who have undergone training through the Virginia Housing and Development Authority (VHDA) and are now VHDA-certified counselors (seven are bilingual in Spanish). The FLAP program has very active Northern Virginia communities, especially Prince William and Fairfax Counties, which have experienced some of the highest rates of foreclosure in the state.



Representative Case

Foreclosure averted amid dishonest organizations

Ethan was a hardworking new husband who purchased a home for his disabled wife and her grandchildren shortly before he was stabbed, robbed, and had his car stolen. Due to weeks of recovery from his injuries, Ethan lost income from his three jobs, and the family fell behind on mortgage payments. His circumstances made his family eligible for assistance from local charities and a HUD-funded homelessness prevention program, which intervened as the home was about to go into foreclosure. Loan servicer GMAC formally agreed to accept the alternative payments and stop foreclosure, but after payments had been made, GMAC still turned the matter over to the trustee for foreclosure. After attempts to stop this injustice failed, LASRV filed an injunction proceeding, alleging violation of the cure agreement and breach of the trustee's fiduciary duties. The trustee finally agreed to explore the problem, and the family's further payments were held by LASRV pending resolution. For months, however, GMAC would not even explain their position to their own attorney. During this time, the family decided they could not stand up to the financial pressure and, with the help of LASRV, offered to resolve the matter by deed to the lender, after which they were able to find new housing.

Hazards, health, and homelessness resolved

Sisters Suzanne and Freda live together with Freda's infant son in a rented apartment. When their apartment began leaking, the sisters alerted the landlord and expressed their concern that the water leak was close to electric outlets. When no repairs were made, they contacted the landlord again. He responded by cutting off the electricity during the hottest part of the summer. Suzanne has major breathing problems and the lack of air conditioning presented a dangerous health issue. They sought help from Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society, whose attorney filed a tenant's assertion in court. The court ordered the landlord to turn the electricity back on and to make the necessary repairs. The court also ruled that Suzanne and Freda did not have to pay two months of their rent.

People with disabilities: Leveling the playing field and promoting independence

- *Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia's* disabled population are those most in need of legal services for their very survival. They generally cannot work, but have been denied disability benefits by the Social Security Administration. Along with the services of LASEV staff attorneys, three paralegals are employed who focus solely on assisting these disabled people obtain the benefits to which they are entitled to. During FY 07-08, LASEV closed 369 cases for such disabled Virginians and obtained more than half a million dollars to help them buy food, clothing, and shelter. Clients were awarded lump sum benefits of \$645,790 and monthly ongoing benefits totaling an additional \$43,839 each month.



Representative Cases

Benefits justly granted

Flora came to Virginia Legal Aid Society's Emporia office with a Social Security disability issue. The local Department of Social Services had terminated Flora's TANF benefits for failing to participate in the TANF work program (VIEW) while her application for Social Security was pending. VLAS successfully argued that TANF sanctions were not appropriate, both because of a client's disability and because of the agency's failure to provide necessary transportation services. As a result, Flora's TANF and Medicaid benefits were reinstated. A Social Security Administration Administrative Law Judge found Flora to be disabled and awarded her Social Security benefits.

A final ray of hope

40-year-old Aileen suffers from Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). She contacted Central Virginia Legal Aid Society in August 2007 seeking representation in a claim for Social Security disability benefits. Aileen had sought disability benefits for over three years and her claim had been denied three times. She indicated she carried numerous disabling diagnoses, including Osteoarthritis, pain, Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, and Major Depression Disorder. An Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) granted a continuance in September to allow CVLAS to determine whether to accept the case. During their investigation, a CVLAS volunteer, who is also a registered nurse, found that, although Aileen is being treated for MRSA, her physician had not clearly nor well documented the course of treatment for the condition. Aileen was able to seek additional diagnoses of her medical conditions and CVLAS advised the ALJ of the MRSA diagnosis. The ALJ decided to continue the case a second time to protect other claimants with decreased immune systems due to their medical conditions and who would be present in the waiting room on the day scheduled for Aileen's hearing. In an effort to assist Aileen in getting the care she needed, a local mental health agency accepted her as a patient upon CVLAS request. Under Section 1614(a)(3) of the Social Security Act, CVLAS is confident Aileen will be found eligible for benefits.

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

- Senior citizens live on such fixed incomes that any change in this income is disruptive. They are often traumatized by reductions in their income, as they take pride in having paid their debts throughout their lives and suddenly are unable to fulfill their obligations. *Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley* engages seniors at debt workshops, addressing the psychological as well as the legal aspects of debt. Many older individuals attending the debt workshop are relieved to find out they won't go to jail or lose their Social Security for unpaid debts.



Representative Cases

Fees averted

Ross is an elderly man who suffers from severe depression and arthritis. His doctor recommended that he go outside more to ease his depressive symptoms. In an attempt to do this, Ross went to Bally's gym where a salesperson convinced him to sign a one-year membership. Ross quickly discovered he could not effectively engage in most activities at the gym due to the arthritis, so he did not return and stopped paying the membership fee. Shortly thereafter, a third-party purchaser of Bally's debts sued Ross for \$1,250, the cost of the one-year membership. A Legal Services of Northern Virginia attorney reviewed the contract and found a provision that stated a membership could be cancelled within 30 days of inception if the member could provide medical documentation that he/she could not work out. Ross had provided this documentation to Bally's. Given the documentation and having had the provision highlighted in the contract, the fitness center and the third-party debt collector dismissed the case and indicated in their files that Ross was exempt from the debt.

An elderly woman remains in her home

Central Virginia Legal Aid Society is representing Olivia, who is in her nineties and under enough stress that her health is becoming affected. She had conveyed her home's title to her son, who allowed her to remain in the brick house. The son then moved a double-wide trailer onto the property as a second residence and proceeded to make several mortgage loans on the property. When he fell behind on the payments the mortgage company foreclosed and filed an eviction action. CVLAS persuaded the son to convey to his mother all his rights, title, and interest in the property, plus any claim he might have to reverse the foreclosure. CVLAS sought to reverse the foreclosure because the newspaper advertisement for the foreclosure listed only one street address for the property; however, due to the trailer, there were two residences and two addresses. The Court continued the case for almost a year while the foreclosure suit was pending. The lender removed the case to federal court, which found in favor of the lender. CVLAS continues to file appeals and is committed to fighting for Olivia's right to remain in her home.

People with challenges to healthcare problems: Assuring healthcare for the masses

- *Virginia Poverty Law Center* became a founding member of Virginians for Health Coverage, a coalition seeking broad health expansions with strong grassroots involvement. VPLC's health attorney spearheaded meetings of the coalition during the 2008 General Assembly session, and prepared and distributed fact sheets to legislators on behalf of the coalition. Thanks to this work, the group achieved the following:
 - FAMIS Moms - Eligibility for pregnant women will increase from 185% FL to 200% FPL July 1, 2009. An additional 400 pregnant women will be assisted each year.
 - Support for Safety Net Programs - Community health centers will receive \$2.7 million additional support and free clinics will receive \$2.6 million additional support.
 - Screenings for Breast and Cervical Cancer - Program funding will increase by \$300,000 in FY 2010 to provide screenings and tests to over 1,000 uninsured women ages 18 through 44.
 - Virginia Dental Association's Missions of Mercy (MOMS) Projects - \$50,000 is provided for dental equipment and supplies for the MOMS projects, which offer free dental care to the uninsured.
- The Child Health Advocacy Program (CHAP) is a holistic service model in Charlottesville and Richmond, made up of a medical-legal collaboration between *Legal Aid Justice Center*, local law schools, and local pediatric hospitals (the UVA Children's Medical Center and UVA School of Law's Public Service Center in Charlottesville, and the Children's Hospital and University of Richmond School of Law in Richmond). CHAP connects families to the resources necessary to solve their problems by holding open client assessment interviews at the Center to help families with a variety of legal problems that affect their health and well-being. Training is also provided for pediatric nurses, doctors, and residents to spot patient problems that may require legal expertise, and refer families to the Legal Aid Justice Center directly.



Representative Case

Appeal to speed help for terminally ill mother

Madison and her disabled husband have nine children between them. Madison has diabetes and a rare bone marrow cancer, which is expected to be terminal. She requires 15-20 prescriptions at a cost of \$1,250 per month. Due to complex family relationships and finances, Social Services processing of aid applications are arduous and complicated. Madison and her family enlisted the help of Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley after their application for Medicaid had been delayed well beyond the usual 45-day time limit. Madison's doctors would not see, treat, or test her due to the delay; her conditions subsequently required a visit to the emergency room. She could only afford partial and infrequent refills of her prescriptions and her condition was deteriorating. LASRV filed for an administrative fair hearing with the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, challenging the delay and pointing out errors in the DSS assignment of the Medicaid category for Madison. Even before the fair hearing date arrived, the Medicaid disability determination unit made a favorable review and determination, allowing retroactive coverage to pay Madison's outstanding doctor bills and allowed her to return to treatment and be stabilized.

Empowerment: *LSCV Grantees Help People to Help Themselves*

In addition to providing direct legal assistance that benefited more than 89,000 people in FY 07-08, legal aid advocates helped 134,042 additional people understand and act upon their legal rights and responsibilities as tenants, parents, employees, spouses, and consumers (see statistics below). 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.

- *Virginia Legal Aid Society* provided many crucial services to clients via its LawLine in FY07-08.

- Staff worked on the development of a food stamp eligibility screening process to be conducted by LawLine paralegals for callers who are not receiving food stamps but appear to be eligible and are interested in applying. The project is supported by a USDA grant.
- A LawLine paralegal who is fluent in Spanish conducted outreach to raise the Hispanic community's awareness of VLAS services. These efforts included distribution of brochures and program information at businesses that are frequented by Hispanic customers, or that have a number of Hispanic employees. The paralegal continues to work with the LawLine managing attorney to make available to clients more Spanish brochures and other written materials.
- Substantive written materials are mailed to clients following completion of telephone intake, which explain their rights and the substance of the law concerning their problem. A major effort is in place to refine and consolidate the materials so as to provide cohesive, comprehensive information that will empower clients to seek effective solutions to their legal problems.
- LawLine engaged in a course of education, awareness, and information for clients affected by the Earned Income Tax Credit and the federal Economic Stimulus Plan. Prior to conducting telephone intake on the problem for which the client was calling, they were asked a short series of questions to determine if they had already filed their 2007 return, including a claim for the EITC, or if not, whether they intended to do so. When appropriate, the caller was given further details about the EITC, sometimes including mailed information. Likewise, callers who had not yet filed were encouraged to do so in order to receive the rebate under the economic stimulus plan.

Summary: Advice, Legal Education, Self-Help, Assistance, and Information

People and Families Benefited

- 24,975 from legal advice and counsel delivered via phone
- 17,675 by referral to other sources of help
- 19,563 from community legal education
- 2,178 from self-help clinics, help centers, etc.
- 94,624 from legal information disseminated in print and within program websites

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

- The JustChildren Program of the *Legal Aid Justice Center* continued to provide high-quality training to legal services programs and other providers on issues related to children's access to appropriate educational services. Using the updated booklet, *Helping You Help Your Child*, the program trained over 280 providers in FY 07-08. The Program's outreach team has successfully incorporated parents into its advocacy efforts, learning from them in the process about the problems they encounter. Many of these parent advocates, in turn, become community leaders. JustChildren staff provide leadership recruitment, training, and support to families in Petersburg to expand the activities and effectiveness of Petersburg Advocates for Children (PAC), a community-based group. This year, JustChildren started a parents' program in Richmond, "Parent Leaders Advocating for Children's Education" or "PLACE," a small but enthusiastic group eager to undertake educational advocacy.

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

- *Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia* places great emphasis on serving the full needs of its clients, not just the narrow legal problems that prompt them to contact LASEV. The roadblocks placed in the clients' paths by poverty are diverse and multifaceted, and LASEV's approach is to look at the whole individual. The position of Community Resource Liaison was created at LASEV to establish an avenue for making community resources more accessible for clients, and in particular, assisting existing clients with pressing needs to obtain the outside resources they need. In a similar vein, LASEV screens all clients for various additional services. The Central Intake Unit screens and makes referrals to Partnership for Prescription Assistance, Consumer Credit Counseling Service, Community Mediation Center, Personal Identification Program, Department of Social Services, and other organizations.
- *Legal Aid Society of the Roanoke Valley* approaches community legal education in multiple venues, including:
 - Meeting with client groups. An LASRV attorney met with parents of low-income children enrolled in the Presbyterian Community Center's "Pathways" afterschool enrichment program and the West End Center Parents' Council to describe the work of Legal Aid and answer questions about legal issues affecting low-income parents.
 - Conducting monthly debt workshops for clients, reviewing the legal consequences of not paying bills, and describing solutions, such as exemption of assets and bankruptcy.
 - Distributing two dozen different pamphlets on subjects ranging from domestic violence to buying a used car, to clients and community service agencies as appropriate.
 - Media attention. LASRV's general counsel appeared on the local NAACP's television show "Our Voices" discussing a variety of issues important to low-income citizens.

Economic Results: More Income for Families and Communities

LSCV grantees produce millions in benefits for needy families.

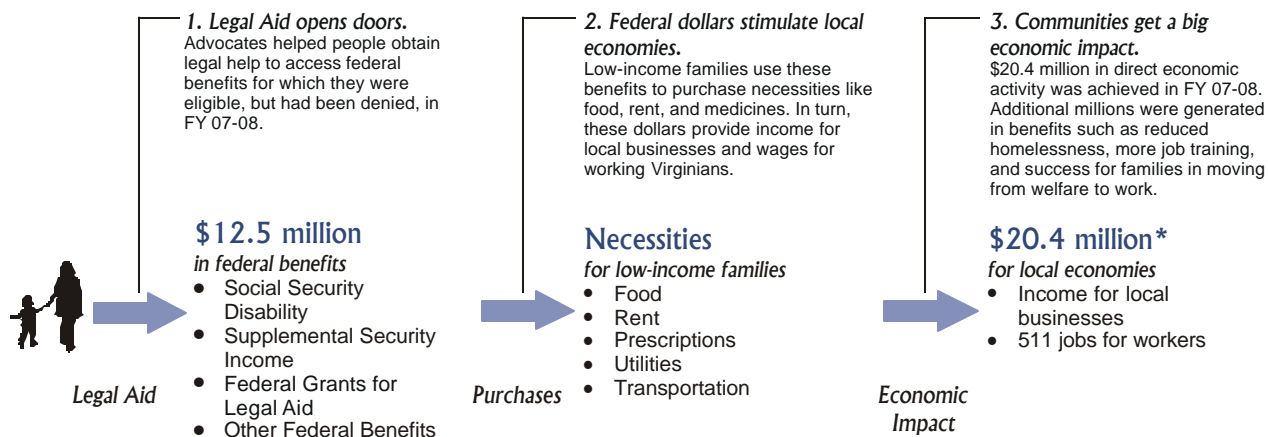
From the purely economic standpoint of dollars generated per dollar invested, the performance of legal aid advocates is outstanding. In FY 07-08 Virginia legal aid advocates won an estimated \$17.8 million in direct benefits for their clients, including child support and alimony payments, Social Security 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.

In FY 07-08, LSCV-funded legal aid advocates obtained \$7.4 million in federal benefits for which low-income Virginians were legally eligible but had been denied. These funds, combined with more than \$5.6 million in federal grant funds received for legal aid programs' own operating support, flowed directly into local communities in the form of salaries, rent, and 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 \$21.3 million in new economic activity and 533 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 these programs 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 07-08:

- *Rappahannock Legal Services*, a longtime advocate of community organizations which focus on family, housing, health, and basic subsistence, works closely with the Rappahannock Council on Domestic Violence (RCDV) in Fredericksburg, Services to Abused Families (SAFE) in Culpeper, and Family Focus in the Northern Neck to serve abused and single-parent families. RLS is currently operating V-STOP-funded and VDVF-funded English- and Spanish-language civil protective order projects in all three of its office service areas, and works with RCDV, SAFE, Family Focus, and local commonwealth attorneys, magistrates, sheriffs' departments, and JDR Court Service Units to prevent domestic violence. RLS also works closely with the Central Virginia Housing Coalition, Community Housing Partners (CHP), Bragg Hill Family Life Center, Hope House, Thurman Brisben Homeless Shelter, Scenario, Culpeper Community Development Corporation (CCDC), Ann Wingfield Housing Corporation, and Al Chaplin Group Home to limit evictions, foreclosures, utility shutoffs, and homelessness and to develop affordable housing.
- *Central Virginia Legal Aid Society* routinely provides considerable advice without charge to members of the private bar on foreclosure cases. Any private lawyer with a client facing foreclosure can call CVLAS and get expert advice and professional courtesy help on how to handle that lawyer's case. That professional courtesy extends to reviewing legal documents to determine if there are grounds to stop foreclosures without resorting to bankruptcy.

Productivity: LSCV-funded programs maximize results for clients.

High performance standards are demonstrated through rigorous evaluation. All grantees are reviewed and audited 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 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 has on low-income individuals and families and their critical needs. For example:

- During FY 07-08, *Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society* helped 72 victims obtain protective orders, 103 parents obtain custody, 20 parents deal with visitation, and 400 people obtain a divorce. They also successfully assisted 72 domestic violence victims obtain a protective order and provided some type of legal services to 350 additional victims.

- *Blue Ridge Legal Services* played a key role in preventing 28 evictions and delaying another 13; obtaining access to housing for one household and preventing four foreclosures; and recovering five tenant families' personal property, wrongfully being withheld by their landlords. BRLS also successfully challenged 17 landlords for illegal charges; obtained repairs for five homes and enforced three households' right to habitable housing; prevented the denial of two public housing tenants' rights; provided non-litigation advocacy for 35 households; advised 303 clients on housing issues; and provided representation in nine other housing cases.
- *Legal Aid Justice Center* measurably achieves an average of over 90% positive outcomes for its clients. Great lengths have been taken to address concerns and identify community needs within the LAJC service area. Work to restore a full-range of services has not only been achieved in the Charlottesville area, but has extended these services to the communities of Petersburg and Richmond.

Legal aid programs and their advocates apply the latest information technology.

- *Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society* recently redesigned its program website and added the option of online application for services. Within less than a month, 140 applications were received. This indicates there is interest in applying online for assistance and that the SVLAS website is receiving a high volume of traffic. The site also includes a link to www.valegalaid.org, a referral to the toll-free Virginia Legal Aid phone number, web links to domestic violence partner agencies, a page that has PDF versions of brochures/registrations of trainings sponsored by SVLAS, a PDF version of their newsletter/annual report, contact information for all offices, and an opportunity for attorneys and law students to volunteer.
- The *Blue Ridge Legal Services* program website serves as a key component in marketing and fundraising efforts, while the statewide website, www.valegalaid.org, provides client information and referral. The intended audience includes prospective clients, attorneys, judges, social services workers, United Way and other local funding sources, prospective contributors, and prospective volunteers, interns, and employees. It has proven useful as a simple contact information source for all of these categories of people who are looking to contact their organization. In 2007, 9,802 unique visitors accessed the BRLS site, compared to 7,945 unique visitors in 2006.



BRLS serves as the fiscal agent for the LSC TIG grant, which funded the creation of a statewide client-focused website, www.valegalaid.org, and the advocate-focused counterpart, www.probono.net/va. As a result, BRLS has played a continuing oversight role in these activities, although staff at the Virginia Poverty Law Center has assumed most of the day-to-day development activities. During 2007, the client website had 41,311 unique visitors, compared to 32,643 unique visitors in 2006. The advocate website has 332 legal aid members, 133 pro bono members, 86 student members, 25 non-legal organizational members, 19 government members, 13 criminal defender members, 9 law school faculty members, 6 court members, 6 civil rights members, and 41 others, for a total of 670 members. The various listservs have proven to be by far the most popular aspect of the advocate site; there are now 19 separate listservs hosted by the site. The most popular include housing, consumer, family, and public benefits.

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 important in providing a system for access to justice for low-income Virginians. The following are some examples of accomplishments reported by LSCV-funded programs in FY 07-08.

- During FY07-08 *Rappahannock Legal Services* utilized 65 of its pro bono attorneys to provide 460 hours of pro bono service in closed cases, valued at \$57,500; 20 of those pro bono attorneys received VA Neighborhood Assistance Act tax credits worth nearly \$38,900. The tax credit program has long been RLS' primary method of stimulating greater pro bono involvement. RLS also utilized 2,427 hours of volunteer service from local college and law students. Their involvement is stimulated by college credits, work study, and public service fellowships. At \$6 per hour of work, their services are valued at more than \$14,000.
- *Blue Ridge Legal Services* set up a pro bono specialty project, which is able to provide legal services and support to the local Habitat for Humanity organization. The project utilizes real estate attorneys who had not previously been able to provide relevant legal assistance through their Pro Bono Referral Program due to the nature of "typical" BRLS cases.

Pro bono statistics

In FY 07-08, volunteer lawyers participating in LSCV-funded programs achieved the following results.

Number of cases completed	3,244
Hours contributed	11,719
Dollar value of services*	\$1.75 million

**Estimated conservatively at \$150 per hour*

Partnerships promote synergy.

- *Virginia Poverty Law Center's* Elder Law attorney remains an active partner in Project 2025, Enhanced Access to Legal Assistance for Older Virginians. This joint initiative between VPLC and the Virginia Department for the Aging began in 2006 when the two organizations received one of six national grants aimed at enhancing legal assistance for older persons in the state. In this fiscal year, the Elder Law attorney conducted two, two-hour free CLEs on "Challenging A Nursing Home's Involuntary Discharge and Failure to Readmit". One presentation in Roanoke drew 19 participants and one in Richmond had 38 people. A private attorney presented one session on powers of attorney, advance medical directives, and wills. The CLEs were offered free-of-charge in exchange for the attorney taking on pro bono work for the local legal aid--either one nursing home case, or drafting three legal documents. Project 2025 plans to provide additional free CLEs in exchange for pro bono work in different parts of the state around these two topics over the next year.

Legal Aid programs promote community awareness and solutions to community-wide problems.

Raising public awareness about the plight of low-income communities helps build a strong network of support. Increasingly, collaboration between legal aid programs is a critical element of the statewide justice system, complementing the work that programs provide within their own client communities. Education and collaboration create synergies, leverage scarce resources more effectively, promote innovation and the sharing of knowledge and ideas, and often generate new solutions to critical issues facing the low-income community. Examples of collaborative efforts undertaken by LSCV-funded grantees in FY 07-08 include:

- *Legal Services of Northern Virginia* established a Medical-Legal Partnership (also known as the Family Advocacy Program) with INOVA Health Systems (Inova Pediatric Center and Care Connection for Children) to provide a comprehensive set of services that address the full spectrum of legal, medical, social, economic, and environmental factors that affect children's health and well-being. LSNV's Family Advocacy Program's underlying premise is that by combining the legal expertise of attorneys with the healthcare expertise of hospital professionals, the needs of low-income children and their families can be holistically addressed and their health and quality of life thereby improved.
- *Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society* recently partnered with West Tennessee Legal Services and other legal aid programs across the country to apply to NeighborWorks for the nation's first round of foreclosure counseling grants. SVLAS worked with those programs to design the project and refine reporting processes. A local staff person was hired and trained for implementation of the project in late FY 07-08. Through West Tennessee Legal Aid, SVLAS also successfully applied for funding to operate a foreclosure counseling program. This is a "fee for service" funding arrangement with a \$61,060 annual reimbursement level.

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. The accomplishments described in this report are the results of extraordinary teamwork by legal aid staff, volunteer board members, private attorneys and leaders in the judiciary, legislature, client community and human services agencies.

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 healthcare. 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 07-08, LSCV grantees' staffs included:

- **148 full time equivalent attorneys.** Legal aid programs employ a balanced mix of young and experienced attorneys who form a solid core and bring fresh ideas, a healthy combination of continuity, and a wealth of experience and expertise in serving their low-income communities.
- **46 full time equivalent paralegals.** Paralegal staff perform a vast range of vital services, including client interviews, legal research, legal document preparation and client representation 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.
- **102 full time equivalent other staff.** These include roughly 63 secretarial-clerical staff and 33 management and professional staff, including fiscal managers, social workers, pro bono coordinators, information technology specialists, website developers 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. They 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.

Volunteer board members and client leaders ensure that legal aid works for the community.

Scores of private lawyers and client community leaders serve without pay on boards of the Virginia legal aid programs without monetary compensation. Their insights as leaders in their respective networks and local communities provide invaluable guidance in setting program priorities and delivering services with a local perspective that truly address the low-income communities' most critical problems. Client organizations are critical resources for legal aid programs, providing client-focused input, conducting training programs, and carrying the message of Equal Justice throughout the Commonwealth.

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 estimates 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. This has been confirmed by a Virginia Low-Income Civil Legal Needs Assessment, commissioned by LSCV and completed in March of 2006.

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia and its grantees are working to close the funding gap. Legal aid advocates are joining with the courts, state legislators and 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.** More than 650,000 people in our state are 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 the 2006 Virginia Legal Needs Survey issued by LSCV, 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 LSCV Legal Needs Survey 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.

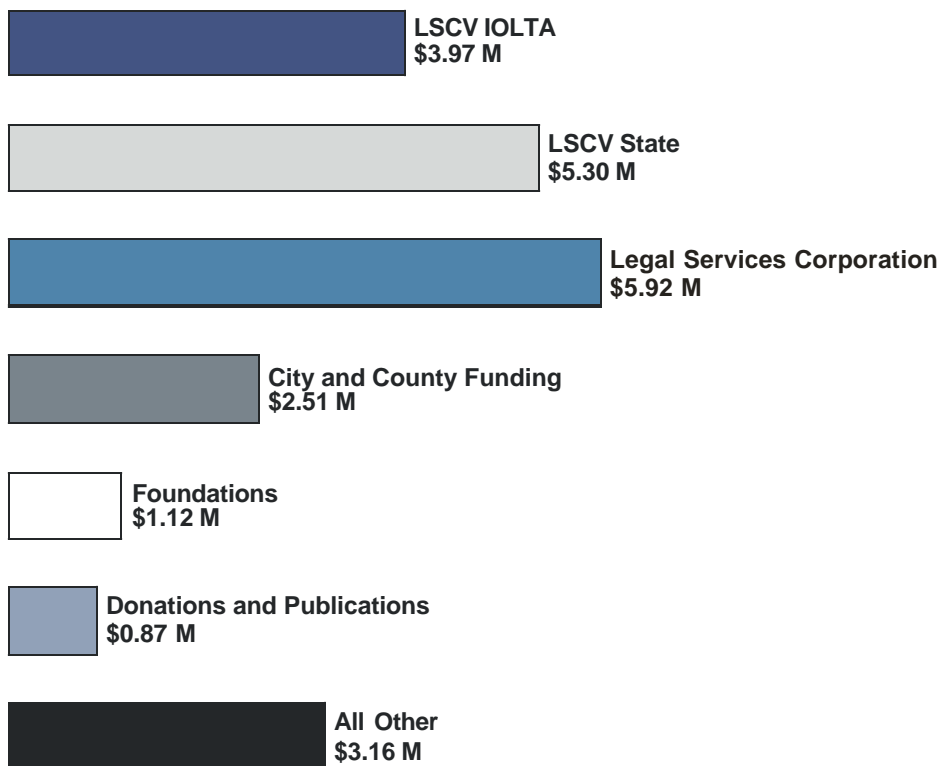
Increased funding from five major sources is the key to narrowing the gap.

The principal sources of funding for legal services programs are LSCV, the federal Legal Services Corporation, 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 exacted a great toll on LSCV IOLTA revenues from 2003-2005. In late 2007 interest rates began to fall again, a trend that will surely impact IOLTA revenues in the year ahead. The need for additional funding of legal aid advocates and their partners in the private bar has never been greater.

FY 07-08 Funding for Virginia's Legal Aid Programs

Total: \$22.85 Million



* "All Other" consists of funding from Other Federal Programs, the United Way, the Private Bar, and others.

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 unmet. This is an unacceptable shortfall in our civil justice system.

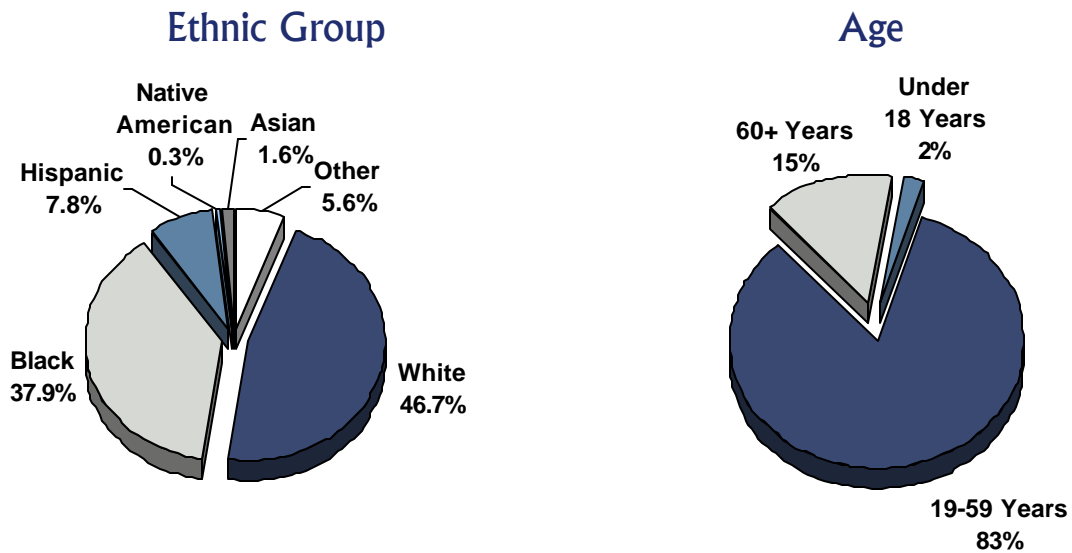
Until the resources have been found to bridge the gap between the need for legal assistance and the capacity to provide it, “Equal Justice Under the Law” will remain an empty promise for many of our most vulnerable citizens. Fulfilling this promise is an investment that will pay the highest possible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

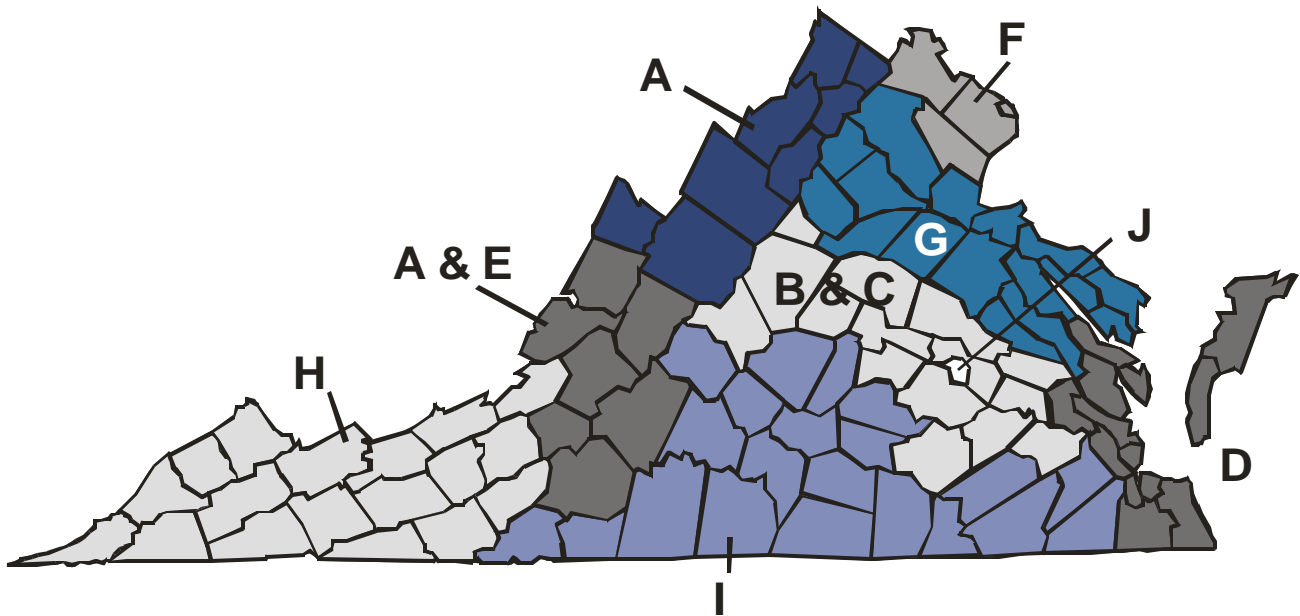
Organization	Advice & Counsel	Brief Service	Referral	Negotiated without Litigation	Negotiated with Litigation	Admin. Agency Decision	Court Decision	Extensive Service	Other	Grand Total
Blue Ridge Legal Services	1,537	331	18	44	102	35	507	30	56	2,660
Central Virginia Legal Aid Society	3,094	228	8	19	43	69	378	5	139	3,983
Legal Aid Justice Center	1,356	471	11	214	123	254	237	13	43	2,722
Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia	3,702	1,055	66	38	66	180	847	15	37	6,006
Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley	759	120	12	21	32	9	97	6	28	1,084
Legal Services of Northern Virginia	2,463	496	106	162	270	91	481	15	376	4,460
Potomac Legal Aid Society	3,166	349	116	1	1	2	14	25	7	3,681
Rappahannock Legal Services	1,058	179	12	30	82	83	337	4	141	1,926
Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society	3,445	318	36	35	38	52	773	25	5	4,727
Virginia Legal Aid Society	3,673	264	0	71	36	114	270	21	76	4,525
Virginia Poverty Law Center	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	24,253	3,811	385	635	793	889	3,941	159	908	35,774

Client Demographics



Appendix B: Local Legal Aid Programs Funded by Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

LSCV FY 2007-08 grant allocations shown in parentheses



A Blue Ridge Legal Services (BRLS); Harrisonburg, Winchester, Roanoke, Lexington (\$501,454)

F Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV); Falls Church, Alexandria, Fairfax, Leesburg, Manassas (\$1,124,298)

B Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS); Richmond, Petersburg, Charlottesville (\$917,535)

G Rappahannock Legal Services (RLS); Fredricksburg, Culpeper, Rappahannock (\$397,343)

C Legal Aid Justice Center (LAJC); Charlottesville, Petersburg, Richmond (\$561,785)

H Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society (SWVLAS); Marion, Castlewood, Christiansburg (\$1,141,452)

D Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia (LSEV); Hampton, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, Belle Haven (\$1,964,177)

I Virginia Legal Aid Society (VLAS); Lynchburg, Danville, Farmville, Emporia, Halifax, Suffolk (\$1,184,039)

E Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley (LASRV); Roanoke (\$480,410)

J Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC); Richmond (Statewide Program) (\$702,129)

Appendix C:

Outcomes Produced for Clients by LSCV-Funded Programs in FY 07-08

1. Dollar Benefits Achieved for Clients*

a. Back awards - total:	\$5,945,806
b. Monthly payments going forward - total per month:	\$442,797
c. One-year total, back awards plus assumed total of benefit stream:*	\$15,953,655

*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.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Major Benefit Achieved</i>	<i># of Cases</i>	<i># People Directly Affected</i>
A. Major Benefit Was Achievement of a Legal Objective			
Family	Obtained a divorce or annulment	1,911	4,627
Family	Obtained or maintained custody of children	794	2,124
Family	Obtained or preserved right to visitation	544	1,421
Miscellaneous	Obtained a living will and/or health proxy or power of attorney	888	1,152
Family	Obtained protection from domestic violence	427	1,014
Family	Obtained assistance in securing	335	819
Family	Obtained representation in a Family matter	295	732
Miscellaneous	Obtained a will	457	645
Consumer	Stopped or reduced debt collection activity	312	629
Housing	Avoided, or obtained redress for, illegal or unfair charges by landlord	250	581
Income Maintenance	Obtained, preserved or increased SSI benefit/right	234	553
Housing	Prevented eviction from subsidized housing	230	538
Consumer	Obtained federal bankruptcy protection	224	534
Consumer	Avoided or ended garnishment or levy	227	532
Housing	Delayed eviction providing time to seek alternative housing	206	483
Housing	Prevented eviction from private housing	176	430
Employment	Obtained wages and/or back pay due	101	422
Family	Obtained, preserved, or increased child support	150	382
Housing	Obtained representation on a Housing matter	155	364
All Problem Areas	Other, none of the above	3,580	6,995
B. Major Benefit Was Access to Legal Information, Advice and/or Assistance From a Lawyer or Paralegal			
All Problem Areas	Received legal advice & counsel	24,503	59,356
All Problem Areas	Received non-litigation advocacy services	1,228	2,782
All Problem Areas	Received referral to another agency	861	2,087
Total, All Cases:		38,088	89,202

Appendix D:

Dollar Benefits, Breakdown by Type of Benefit

	<i>Back Awards</i> <i>a</i>	<i>Monthly Benefits</i> <i>b</i>	<i>Assumed Duration</i> <i>c</i>	<i>Total Benefits*</i> <i>d</i>
a. Social Security/SSI	\$2,192,848	\$133,717	<i>36 months</i>	\$7,006,666
b. Other Public Benefits	\$137,188	\$19,426	<i>12 months</i>	\$370,300
c. Unemployment Comp	\$337,994	\$59,499	<i>6 months</i>	\$694,990
d. Family Law				
<i>(1) Child Support</i>	\$527,841	\$76,753	<i>36 months</i>	\$3,290,949
<i>(2) Alimony</i>	\$418,326	\$35,748	<i>12 months</i>	\$847,302
3. All "Other" Types of Cases	\$2,331,609	\$117,653	<i>12 months</i>	\$3,743,448
Total:	\$5,945,806	\$442,797		\$15,953,655

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

Legal Services Corporation of Virginia
700 East Main Street, Suite 1504
Richmond, VA 23219

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 563
Richmond, VA