



ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Providing FREE high-quality civil legal services to Alaskans since 1967

FACT SHEET: ALSC COMMUNITY IMPACT



\$10.3M

Annual Budget



12 Offices

Serving 204 Alaskan Communities



6,203

Cases Handled in FY24



17,145

Alaskans Helped in FY24



86%

ALSC Positive Case Results



5 to 1

Return on Investment for Alaska

Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) is a private nonprofit law firm offering free civil legal aid to low-income individuals. Committed to ensuring equal access to justice for all Alaskans, ALSC plays a vital role in supporting the state's most vulnerable populations.

ALSC generates millions in measurable economic benefits. Through partnerships with local governments, nonprofits and tribal partnerships, ALSC maximizes resources and maintains a crucial presence in both urban and rural Alaska.

As the only private provider of comprehensive legal services in these areas, ALSC ensures no Alaskan is left behind. Every dollar invested in ALSC creates five dollars in economic impact, benefiting clients, communities, and the state.*

“Rural areas face significant barriers to justice—geographic isolation, limited broadband access, unique cultural traditions, and, in tribal areas, their own legal systems. At its core, it’s a numbers problem: there just aren’t enough lawyers in rural communities.”
— John Levi, Board Chair, Legal Services Corporation

ALASKA’S JUSTICE GAP

The justice gap is the significant divide between the civil legal needs of low-income individuals and the availability of resources to meet those needs. This gap leaves many people without access to legal help for critical issues such as housing instability, domestic violence, or denial of essential benefits.

In Alaska, this challenge is amplified by its vast geography and remote communities, creating legal deserts where civil legal aid is scarce or entirely unavailable, leaving many to face complex legal issues alone.



There is only one (1) ALSC attorney for every 10,000 eligible Alaskans.



<50%

ALSC’ average acceptance rate due to limited resources



182 Alaskans

Could be served with \$100K in additional funding

*For more information, see “An Analysis of the Economic Impacts and Social Benefits of Assistance Provided by Alaska Legal Services Corporation”, a report prepared by The Resource for Great Programs, Inc., with Funding Provided by Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.





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FACT SHEET: COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKER PROGRAM

COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKERS: EXPANDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Alaska Legal Services Corporation's Community Justice Worker (CJW) Program is a new approach to solving the justice gap, by upskilling non-attorney advocates across Alaska to provide certain legal services with ALSC's training and supervision. This program is the first-of-its-kind in the nation, a true innovation that looks beyond lawyer-based solutions to achieve justice.

"Expanding access to justice requires innovation and moving past the idea that an attorney or a courtroom is the best or only solution for Alaskans." - Alaska Court System, Justice for All Statewide Action Plan

THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE GAP

Rural communities across the U.S. face inequities in employment, health care, and education, leaving individuals at higher risk for civil legal issues. These regions often lack legal counsel and resources to address such challenges. According to the 2022 report *The Justice Gap: Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans* by the Legal Services Corporation, 92% of serious legal problems for low-income Americans went unresolved or under-addressed last year. In Alaska, the situation is worse: just 1.13 attorneys are available per 10,000 Alaskans in poverty. Many areas are "legal deserts," where residents face issues like domestic violence, housing loss, and debt collection without any legal aid.

JUSTICE IN ACTION: HOW THE CJW PROGRAM WORKS

The CJW Program bridges the justice gap by recruiting and training qualified non-lawyer advocates—including paralegals, tribal advocates and employees, village health aides, social service workers, undergraduate and law school students—to serve Alaskans who cannot afford or otherwise access civil legal help. CJWs supplement existing ALSC staff and pro bono attorney efforts to help Alaskans in their community with:



Accessing
Unemployment
Benefits



Debt Collection
Defense



Domestic Violence
Protective Order
Advocacy



Estate Planning



Indian Child
Welfare Act
Matters



Public Assistance
Delays + Denials

KEY MILESTONES

2022: Alaska Supreme Court approves landmark waiver permitting CJWs trained and supervised by ALSC to provide limited scope legal help in certain situations, creating a pathway for a new non-lawyer community-based workforce.

2023–Present: ALSC launches the Community Justice Worker Resource Center (CJWRC), developing resources, curriculum, and certification. Through National Sciences Foundation Civic Innovation Grant and LSC Disaster Grant funding, ALSC has hired key CJWRC staff, including a CJW Support Director and 5 staff CJWs in disaster impacted areas.





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PROVEN IMPACT

Since its inception in 2019, the CJW Program has achieved extraordinarily positive outcomes in completed cases, providing vital assistance to Alaskans who otherwise would have gone without legal help. The program delivers three essential benefits:



Workforce Development

Skilled legal advocates offering expertise and growth opportunities.



Access to Justice

Legal help in communities with no attorneys.



Stronger Communities

Culturally informed support through trusted local advocates.

PARTNERSHIPS AND RESEARCH

In partnership with Alaska Pacific University and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, ALSC launched the CJW Program. Local partners include the Association of Village Council Presidents and Kodiak Area Native Association.

The program's success has attracted national attention as a potential solution to the nation's growing civil justice crisis. Harvard's Access to Justice Lab is studying it, while an American Bar Foundation team is helping ALSC design evidence-based training to expand CJW skills and scale the program.

PROGRAM RECOGNITION

- The program received a \$1 million 2022 CIVIC Innovation Grant from the National Science Foundation to expand further, recognizing its success in community engagement and creating scalable impact.
- During the 2024 US Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on "Closing the Justice Gap" LSC President Ron Flagg recognized the CJW Alaska Model as a promising and innovative legal service delivery solution.
- The American Academy of Arts & Sciences publication "Achieving Civil Justice" describes the Alaska Model as a proven and effective approach to closing the civil justice gap.
- Texas, Arizona, and other states across the nation are examining or in the process of replicating the CJW Alaska Model.

CJW PROGRAM NEXT STEPS

Over the next year, the program will work with the American Bar Foundation affiliated research team to continue designing evidence-based training programs including the areas of eviction defense, disaster response, and probate. The CJWRC, with LSC Disaster Relief Grant funding, is developing resources and training to support CJWs in 12 natural disaster areas in American Indian and Alaska Native communities served by ALSC, Montana Legal Services, Oklahoma Indian Legal Services, Anishinabe Legal Services, and DNA People's Legal Services.





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FACT SHEET SB 1: Amending Civil Legal Services Fund Sponsored by Senator Dunbar

OVERVIEW

SB 1 seeks to amend [AS 37.05.590](#) (the statute creating the Civil Legal Services Fund) so that up to 25% of Court System filing fees can be appropriated by the Legislature to the Fund each year to provide access to civil legal aid for low-income Alaskans with critical legal needs.

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND

The Civil Legal Services Fund was established as a special account in the general fund. It was amended in 2018 with nearly unanimous support after widespread bi-partisan acknowledgement that ALSC was severely underfunded.

At the discretion of the Legislature, funds are deposited from Alaska’s 50% share of civil punitive damage awards and up to 10% of court filing fees received in the most recent Fiscal Year. These funds are then available to supplement ALSC’s appropriation.

The availability of funds is dependent on court system filings and punitive damages awards to the state, causing the amount available from the fund to vary widely. Since the fund was established in 2007, available funds have fluctuated greatly from \$0 to \$360K.

In SFY25, \$296,500 was appropriated from the fund to ALSC, the amount available for appropriation in SFY26 is \$312,600.

AMENDING AS 37.05.590

Amending the fund to allocate 25% of court filing fees is essential to meet the growing demand for civil legal assistance. Since the 2018 amendment, community needs have continued to rise. Combined with inflation, this demand has stretched ALSC’s resources thin. It is time to amend the fund again.

Increasing the fund’s allocation will help close Alaska’s civil justice gap, delivering life-changing legal aid to vulnerable residents. As the state’s primary civil legal resource, ALSC receives most legal service referrals but faces growing demand and declining support.

The charts below show the disparity between ALSC’s rising client population and state funding, which has dropped from \$1.2M in 1984 to \$696,500 in 2024. At current funding levels, ALSC must turn away hundreds of families each year due to limited resources.



MAKING THE FUND MORE EFFECTIVE

Current court filing fees go to the general fund. By appropriating 25% of these fees to the Civil Legal Services Fund, additional revenue will be generated to address unmet life-altering civil legal needs statewide.





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LEGAL AID IMPORTANCE:

Civil legal aid ensures fairness in the justice system. It provides access to legal help for people who cannot afford it otherwise, to protect their livelihoods, health, and families. We need civil legal aid to make sure the principle our founding fathers envisioned remains alive: Justice for all, not the few who can afford it.

WHO LEGAL AID HELPS:

- Seniors
- Veterans
- Disabled Alaskans
- Domestic Violence Survivors
- Low-Income Workers + Consumers
- Children

HOW LEGAL AID HELPS:

- Ends Financial Abuse
- Prevents Homelessness
- Secures Child Support
- Secures Lawful Benefits
- Stops Domestic Violence

WHY THIS FUND IS NECESSARY

Nearly every state supports civil legal aid with court fees and fines, and/or state appropriations. Alabama, Florida, and Idaho are the only states that do not receive any state funding.

The 2017 Alaska Court System's Access to Justice Committee report affirmed ALSC as Alaska's primary resource for civil legal issues, receiving most referrals for legal services, followed by the court system and its Family Law Self-Help Center.

The American Community Survey estimates 1 in 7 Alaskans—approximately 98,225 Alaskans are currently living below 125% of the federal poverty line, a number rising each year. For most, access to civil justice depends solely on Alaska Legal Services Corporation.

The May 2000 Alaska Supreme Court Access to Civil Justice Task Force recommended ALSC receive state funding equivalent to levels from the 1980s. Adjusted for inflation and poverty growth, this would exceed \$4.9M in 2024. ALSC's 2025 total operating budget is \$10.3M.



Each year, Alaskan households eligible for ALSC services face an estimated 38,308 legal issues, based on a study by the American Bar Association, which found an average of 1.01 legal problems per household annually. Approximately half of low-income households experience at least one legal issue each year, often with multiple interconnected problems.

ADDRESSING ALASKA'S GROWING CIVIL JUSTICE GAP

The "justice gap" is the difference between the level of legal assistance available and the level that is necessary to meet the needs of low-income individuals. At current funding levels, ALSC turns away hundreds of families seeking assistance each year due to resource limitations.





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FACT SHEET: ALSC OVERVIEW

ABOUT ALSC

Established in 1967, Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit law firm providing free civil legal aid to low-income Alaskans, promoting stability, safety, and health.

With 12 offices and a strong volunteer network, ALSC serves individuals and families in every Alaska community.



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CIVIL LEGAL AID

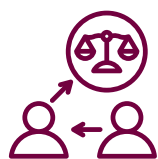
Civil legal aid organizations like ALSC provide free legal help to ensure all Americans can access and navigate the civil justice system. Unlike in criminal cases, there's no constitutional right to an attorney in civil matters.

This leaves many low-income individuals facing life-altering challenges—like domestic abuse, eviction, or denied benefits—without legal representation. Civil legal aid protects their livelihoods, safety, homes, and families. It upholds a core American value: justice for all, not just those who can afford it.

When confronted with these oftentimes life-altering civil legal issues, low-income Americans receive no or inadequate assistance for a stunning 92% of their significant civil legal needs. -Legal Services Corporation (LSC) 2022 Justice Gap Report

ALSC SERVICES

ALSC provides free civil legal aid to Alaskans navigating life's toughest challenges, protecting livelihoods, health, housing, and families. Our services address legal issues ranging from preventing unlawful foreclosures and securing veterans' benefits to helping survivors of domestic violence find safety.



Legal Representation

From advice to full court representation for eligible clients.



Legal Assistance

Clinics, helplines, online resources, and forms for all Alaskans, regardless of income.



Pro Bono Program

An award-winning network of volunteer attorneys and justice workers handling pre-screened cases.





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ALSC FUNDING

ALSC receives funding from multiple sources including federal, state, and local governments, tribal organizations, foundations, and private donations. For more than 55 years, ALSC has consistently received a state appropriation under every administration. This appropriation is managed through the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, specifically in the Community and Regional Affairs division.

In addition, the Civil Legal Services Fund ([AS 37.05.590](#)), passed by the 30th Alaska State Legislature with near-unanimous bipartisan support, supplements ALSC's appropriation.

"As a former Attorney General for the State of Alaska, and now as a U.S. Senator, I have worked closely with Alaska Legal Services and have seen firsthand the invaluable representation it offers Alaskans." - U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF ALSC

Generating a 5:1 return on investment annually for Alaskan governments, businesses and communities. Communities save money from ALSC's success in reducing homelessness; helping children, veterans, seniors, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations secure federal benefits, and decreasing the incidence of domestic violence.*

ALSC focuses on essential legal issues: housing, health care, safety, etc.

- Prevents unfair outcomes due to lack of legal representation.
- Ensures equal access to justice for low-income and vulnerable populations.
- Promotes community stability by addressing legal issues impacting well-being.
- Reduces public costs by helping people maintain housing and access benefits.

"Alaska Legal Services provides a great service for Native people and should be better funded." — Employee, Copper River Native Association; Law Enforcement Officer

Source: Report of the Alaska Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Fairness and Access (1997)

HELPING THE ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

ALSC is the most referred-to legal provider in Alaska, followed by the Alaska Court System and its Family Law Self-Help Center. ALSC helps streamline the court system by reducing unnecessary lawsuits and court costs. Its legal representation improves the efficiency of civil legal proceedings in courts, while self-help resources help parties navigate the system more effectively.

SUPPORTING CIVIL LEGAL AID

ALSC's work ensures that the fundamental American value of "equal justice under law," engraved on the U.S. Supreme Court building, is a reality for Alaskans regardless of their income. Funding for ALSC is critical to protect America's founding principles of liberty and justice for all.

*The Resource for Great Programs, Inc., An Analysis of the Economic Impacts and Social Benefits of Assistance Provided by Alaska Legal Services Corporation, 2012. Available at: <https://www.alsc-law.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Economic-Impacts-and-Social-Benefits-of-Legal-Assistance-Provided-by-ALSC.pdf>

