

Alaska Legal Services Corporation



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Executive Director

What will be covered today...

- Introduction to Alaska Legal Services (ALSC), civil legal aid and Alaska's Justice Gap
- Types of services ALSC provides
- Who qualifies for ALSC assistance
- Funding history – state appropriation
- Civil Legal Services Fund
- Impact of loss of GF



Introduction to ALSC

Established in 1967 as a private non-profit law firm.

ALSC's mission is to provide high quality **civil legal aid** to Alaskans who don't have the means to afford it on issues related to protecting personal safety, health and to promote family stability, protecting livelihoods.



Civil Legal Aid

What is it?

Free legal assistance to low income people and their families who have civil legal problems.

Why is civil legal aid needed?

Unlike in criminal cases, defendants in civil cases have no right to representation.

Civil legal aid assures fairness for all in the justice system, regardless of how much money you have.



Why is Civil Legal Aid Important?

Civil legal aid ensures fairness for all in the justice system. It provides access to legal help for people who cannot afford it otherwise, to protect their livelihood, their health or their family.

We need civil legal aid to ensure that the very principle our founding fathers envisioned remains alive:

Justice for all, not the few who can afford it.



About ALSC

12 hub offices serve every community in Alaska

- Anchorage, Bethel, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Kenai, Kodiak, Ketchikan, Kotzebue, Juneau, Nome, Palmer/Wasilla and Utqiagvik.

Statewide footprint

- Wide variety of sources: federal, state and local governments; tribal organizations; foundations; and private donations.
- Strategic partnerships to leverage resources.

Office Priorities

- Case acceptance decisions are guided by priorities established by the local office with input from local communities and approved by our governing board.

Board of Directors – Regional Representation

- Located throughout the state - attorneys and lay members.



Office Locations

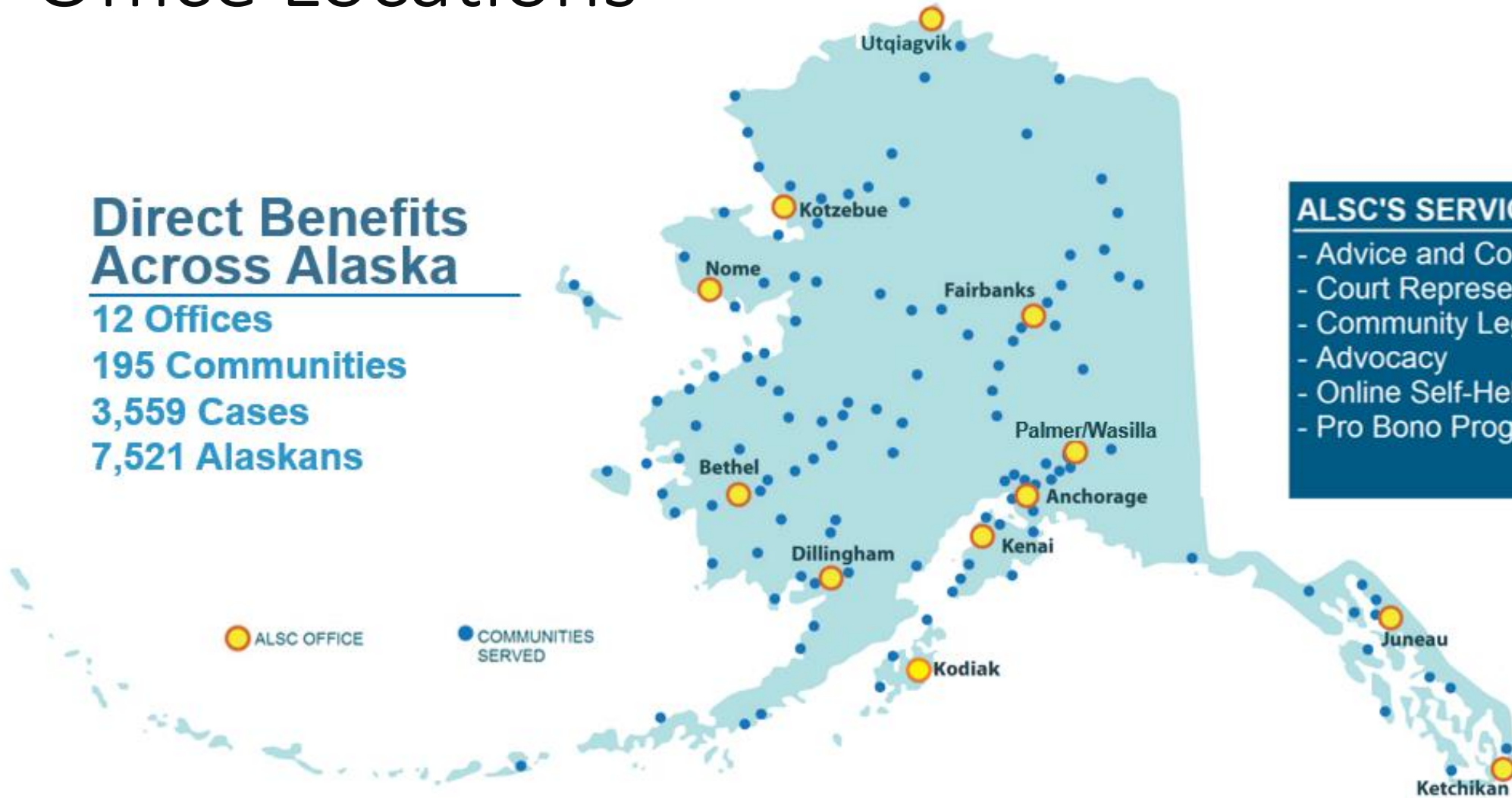
Direct Benefits Across Alaska

12 Offices

195 Communities

3,559 Cases

7,521 Alaskans



ALSC'S SERVICES

- Advice and Counsel
- Court Representation
- Community Legal Clinics
- Advocacy
- Online Self-Help
- Pro Bono Program

Direct Legal Assistance

Family

- Help parents obtain and keep custody of their children
- Assist family members with guardianship of orphaned and abused children
- Secure protective orders for victims of domestic violence

Housing

- Resolve landlord-tenant disputes
- Avoid wrongful foreclosures or renegotiate mortgages
- Help renters whose landlords are being foreclosed upon

Wills and Estates

- Probate matters, will drafting for seniors, veterans, victims of violence, and other special circumstances

Income Maintenance

- Help clients obtain veterans' unemployment, disability, and healthcare benefits for which they are eligible
- Provide representation when benefits are wrongly denied

Consumer

- Protect the elderly and other vulnerable individuals from being victimized by unscrupulous lenders or merchants
- Provide legal advice about debt management and consumer rights



Income Eligibility

The maximum annual income level for an individual seeking legal assistance is 125% of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines for Alaska (2020), as follows:

Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$19,938	\$1,662	\$383
2	\$26,938	\$2,245	\$518
3	\$33,938	\$2,828	\$653
4	\$40,938	\$3,412	\$787
5	\$47,938	\$3,995	\$922
6	\$54,938	\$4,578	\$1,057
7	\$61,938	\$5,162	\$1,191
8	\$68,938	\$5,745	\$1,326
Each additional	\$7,000	\$583	\$135

ALSC is PROHIBITED from participating in the following types of cases:

- Criminal cases
- Abortion-related litigation of any kind
- Representation of undocumented immigrants (except where human trafficking is involved)
- Class actions
- Representation of prisoners
- Representation of those evicted from public housing due to illegal drug use
- Redistricting activities
- Cases where a private attorney would take the case on a contingency fee basis



Types of Services

- **Direct legal help:** ranges from one-time advice sessions to full representation in state and federal court as well as federal, state, and local administrative agencies
- **Special Projects**
- **Online Self-Help**
- **Pro Bono Program**
- **Free Legal Clinics, Helplines, Education & Outreach**
- **Pro Bono Training Academy**



ELDER LAW PHONE CLINIC

December 26th: 10 AM to 2 PM

Call (202) 964-0145 to discuss your legal issue with an attorney.

- Healthcare
- Housing
- Consumer Law & Public Benefits
- Family Law
- Advance Planning
- Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation



ALSC Landlord & Tenant **Helpline**

Questions about your lease?
Problems with your rental unit?

Call and speak with an attorney for free about your situation!

This helpline is offered weekly
Monday through Thursday from
6:00pm - 8:00pm starting January 25th.

Anchorage callers: 907-743-1000
Statewide toll-free: 855-743-1001



WILLS & ESTATE PLANNING CLINIC



JAN 21, 2021
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
HOSTED ONLINE AT
www.AKCVMF.org

Do you need a will? Great news: on January 21st, volunteer lawyers will be available to assist income-qualifying veterans draft and complete their wills in just one appointment

ABSOLUTELY FREE!

LIMITED SLOTS ARE AVAILABLE & AN APPOINTMENT IS REQUIRED

To check your eligibility in advance, obtain an application, and schedule your appointment:

Call 907-222-4501 or Email Anchorage@alsc-law.org

To connect, you need a secure internet connection and a device like a phone, computer, or tablet with audio and video capabilities. The clinic uses a secure, private, HIPAA-compliant video conferencing software to ensure confidentiality.



For more information, contact:
David Chapa, MS, CSCM
Executive Director
Alaska Coalition for Veterans & Military Families
907-334-0873
David@akcvmf.org

ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

ALASKA NATIVE VETERANS ALLOTMENT PROGRAM

Information & Help Facebook Live Event

Wednesday, January 13th at 12:00 PM



The Alaska Native Veterans Program of 2019 will provide the opportunity for eligible Vietnam-era veterans or their heirs to select 2.5 to 160 acres of Federal land in Alaska.

Self-Help Resources



The screenshot shows the AlaskaLawHelp.org website. At the top is the logo and navigation links: About Us, Site Help, Feedback, and Court Information and Forms. Below this is a dark blue header with 'Understand Your Legal Issue' and 'Find Legal Help'. A search bar is present. The main content area features a large banner with the text 'Understand your legal issue, solve your problem' and a photo of two women. Below the banner are icons for various legal topics: Family, Domestic Violence, Health Care & Public Benefits, Money Problems, Housing, and Seniors. A 'Legal Clinics & Hotlines' calendar is also visible, showing dates like Thursday, February 9 and Tuesday, February 14.

HOME > GET LEGAL INFO



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Choose a link below to find free resources, articles, and court forms about that topic. COVID-19 legal rights are changing every day. Check back here regularly to see if your situation is covered by a new law.

[Housing and Utilities \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Domestic Violence \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Unemployment \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Courts \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Health \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Worker Rights \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Debts \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Elder Services \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Public Benefits \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Stimulus Checks \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Child in Need of Aid \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Divorce and Custody \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Wills and End of Life Planning \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Family Law \(COVID-19\)](#)

Pro Bono Training Academy

- Free legal webinars for CLE credit
- Library resources such as templates and sample briefings
- Mentor matching system



AlaskaAdvocates.org

» **CLE Recordings**

View CLE trainings

» **Volunteer**

Find a volunteer opportunity

» **Library**

Find resources to support your pro bono work

» **News**

Find out the latest on pro bono in Alaska

» **Members**

Network with other volunteers

» **Calendar**

View upcoming trainings and other events

Pro Bono Activities

- The Early Resolution Project in Anchorage, Palmer, Kenai and Juneau
- Volunteer Attorney of the Day
- Day of Service Events
- Legal Clinics and Legal Education
- Landlord/Tenant Helpline
- Housing Court Justice Project
- Legal advice for small business owners during COVID-19

FREE LEGAL HELP

MON. JAN. 18 MLK DAY

MLK DAY OF SERVICE
A DAY ON NOT A DAY OFF
MONDAY, JAN. 18, 2021



ASK A LAWYER ABOUT
FAMILY: Child Support, Custody, Divorce, Guardianship
HOUSING: Eviction, Foreclosure, Allotments
PUBLIC BENEFITS: Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security
OTHER: Employment, Probate, Estate Planning

BY PHONE noon to 4 p.m., Mon. Jan. 18
 **844-263-1849**
Alaskans with low and moderate incomes can call and be connected with an attorney who will confidentially answer questions about any civil legal issue.

VIRTUAL LEGAL CLINIC ongoing
 Alaska.FreeLegalAnswers.org
Visit the website to see if you qualify for free help.

LAWYERS DOING GOOD WORK: A public service event hosted by the Alaska Bar Association, Alaska Court System, Alaska Legal Service Corporation, and local bar associations. Generously supported by GCI Alaska.

ALSC Pro Bono Program Snapshot SFY20



118

Attorney volunteers donated time to ALSC's pro bono program.



4,239

Hours donated for direct casework, pro bono legal clinics, and special projects



\$635,850

Estimated value of pro bono services based on conservative \$150 per hour.

Most Common Direct Pro Bono Services



FAMILY



CONSUMER



LIFE PLANNING

The ALSC Pro Bono Program has assisted thousands of low-income Alaskans with their civil legal problems through a statewide network of volunteer attorneys and other professionals.

ALSC is efficient, cost-effective and achieves positive results in 86% of cases

5:1 ROI

- Boosting the economies of Alaska communities
- In addressing client legal problems, ALSC secures millions of dollars in direct federal benefits for eligible families, stimulates local spending, sustains private sector jobs, and spares state and local budgets the costs of responding to family crises triggered by domestic violence, foreclosure, eviction, or lack of healthcare.
- Positive outcomes are achieved **86%** of the time.



Without ALSC the legal needs of many would go unmet

In SFY 2020...

1042 victims and their children obtained protection from domestic abuse

- ALSC helps victims of abuse to stabilize their lives, protect themselves and their children, and gain access to vital services such as health care and public benefits.

1600 veterans, disabled persons, and seniors received legal help

- ALSC helps these clients to obtain federal veterans and disability benefits, social security, access to healthcare, assists with powers of attorney and wills.

534 low-income Alaskans and their families received assistance for housing issues

- ALSC helps Alaskans prevent foreclosure, resolve landlord-tenant disputes, and repair substandard housing. This helps people to remain in their homes and reduces the social and economic cost of homelessness, including emergency shelter, medical treatment, lost educational opportunities, missed work days, and reduced income. Thousands of other Alaskans also received help from ALSC from our Landlord & Tenant Helpline.

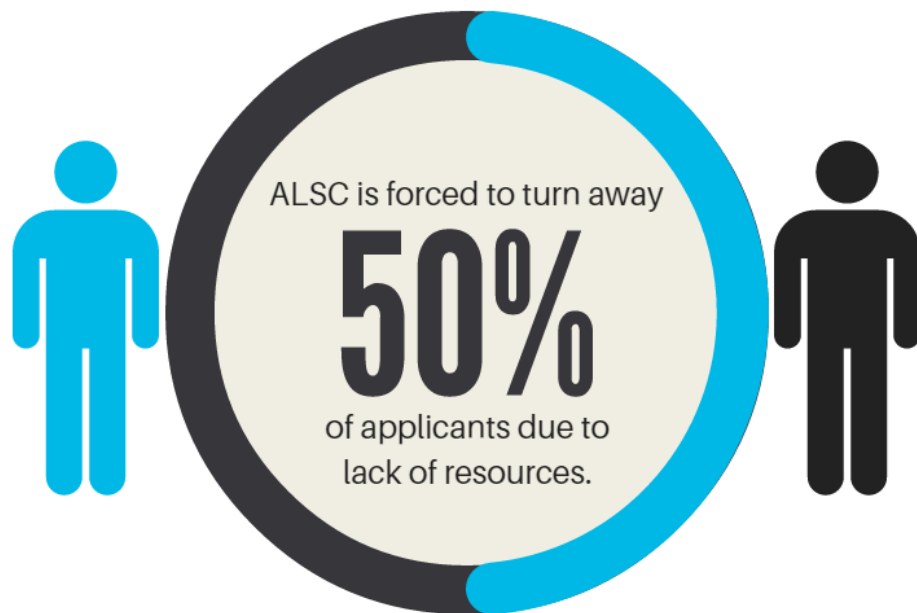
5984 children benefited from legal assistance to their parents

- ALSC enhances family safety, housing, income and access to healthcare, thereby improving the ability of children to achieve success in school and later in life.



Closing Alaska's 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.



There are only 1.13 ALSC staff attorneys available for every



10,000 Alaskans in poverty.

Source: 2016 Justice Index, A Project of the National Center for Access to Justice

Alaska's Justice Gap

100,420 Alaskans – 13.9% of our state's population – qualify for civil legal aid at or below 125% of the federal poverty level.

Additionally, during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate grew from 5.9% to 13.7% over the course of one month leaving **45,960** Alaskans unemployed and at risk for eviction, food insecurity, and other barriers to their health and safety.

ALSC had a 35% increase in applications for civil legal help. 50% of applicants are turned away due to lack of resources.

Low-income Alaskans experience an estimated 2.1 civil legal issues every 18 months, that often coexist with a myriad of other issues.



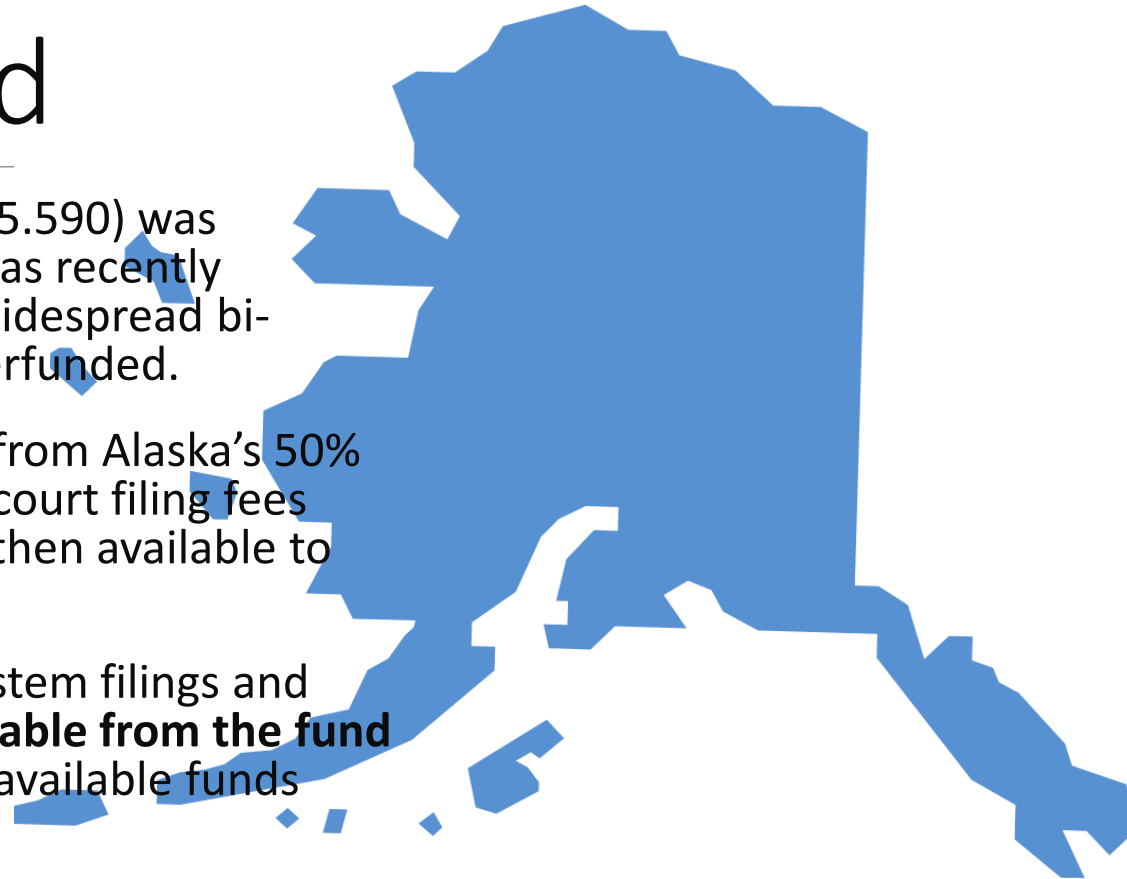
Civil Legal Services Fund

The Civil Legal Services Fund (created by statute AS 37.05.590) was established as a special account in the general fund, it was recently amended (2018) with nearly unanimous support after widespread bipartisan 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.

Because the available of funds is dependent on court system filings and punitive damages awards to the state, **the amount available from the fund can vary widely**. Since established almost 15 years ago available funds have fluctuated greatly from \$110K to \$0 to \$360K.

This year, \$360,346 was appropriated from this fund to ALSC, the amount available for appropriation from the fund for FY22 is \$311,584.



Alaska Legal Services Corporation – State GF and Civil Legal Services Fund Appropriations 1985-2022

Year	GF	Civil legal Services Fund
FY 85	\$1,200,000	
FY 86	\$1,000,000	
FY 87	\$499,000	
FY 88	\$475,000	
FY 89	\$475,000	
FY 90	\$475,000	
FY 91	\$475,000	
FY 92	\$475,000	
FY 93	\$475,000	
FY 94	\$311,000	
FY 95	\$311,000	
FY 96	\$150,000	
FY 97	\$150,000	
FY 98	\$175,000	
FY 99	\$175,000	
FY 00	\$175,000	
FY 01	\$175,000	
FY 02	\$175,000	
FY 03	\$175,000	

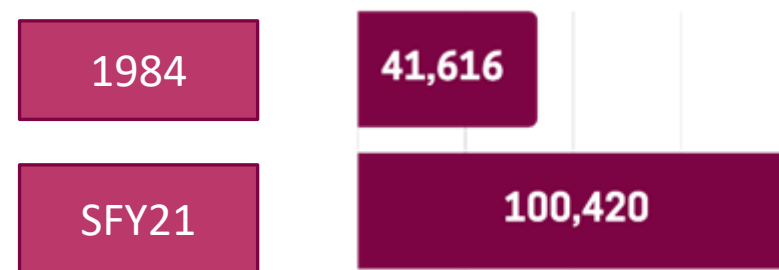
Year	GF	Civil legal Services Fund
FY 04	\$125,000	
FY 05	\$125,000	
FY 06	\$0	
FY 07	\$0	
FY 08	\$0	Fund Created
FY 09	\$200,000	
FY 10	\$200,000	
FY 11	\$350,000	
FY 12	\$350,000	\$110,000
FY 13	\$550,000	
FY 14	\$550,000	
FY 15	\$550,000	
FY 16	\$450,000	
FY 17	\$450,000	
FY 18	\$450,000	
FY 19	\$450,000	Amended
FY 20	\$450,000	\$309,000
FY 21	\$450,000	\$360,000
FY 22 - Proposed		\$311,000

Historical Funding compared to eligibility

ALSC STATE APPROPRIATION



ELIGIBLE POPULATION



Impact of Proposed GF Reduction



Every dollar cut in ALSC's budget results in five dollars lost in economic benefits to ALSC's clients, their communities, and the state.

Economic Impact of Eliminating \$450K to Alaska Legal Services Corporation

The Governor's proposed Budget eliminates
ALSC's \$450K State Appropriation.

-\$450K
State Funding Cut



Category	Value
State Funding Cut	-\$450K
Economic Impact	-\$2.25M

-\$ 2.25M
Economic Impact



- The legal system is complicated, especially when trying to navigate it alone.
- When legal aid is available, Alaskans are empowered with tools and knowledge needed to access the civil court system to protect and exercise their rights.
- Getting people the civil legal help they need gives everyone a fair chance to be heard and helps our courts manage their case loads.
- ALSC helps fulfill our nation's promise of justice for all.