Nevada Legal Needs and Economic Impact Study

The state’s most critical legal needs, the capacity to meet them, and the benefits of legal aid, including its economic impact on communities across Nevada.

Nevada Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission  Nevada’s Legal Aid Providers
Mission

The Access to Justice Commission works with Nevada’s legal aid providers to improve access to civil justice for people of limited means in Nevada

- Assess needs
- Develop policies
- Improve self-help and pro bono
- Increase awareness
- Pursue funding
- Recommend rules and legislation
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DEMographics
Whom Does Legal Aid Serve in Nevada?
**DEMOGRAPHICS** Legal Aid’s Target Population Numbers Between 400,000 and 990,000 Low-Income Nevadans

- **Income eligibility varies** Criteria are set by legal aid programs & their funders
- **Most conservative estimate** 400,000 Nevadans have incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line (shown in graph at right)
- **Generally** Eligibility cutoffs range between 100% & 200% of poverty
- **At the high end of this range** 990,000 Nevadans have incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Segment</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total: People ( \leq 100% ) Poverty</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &lt; 18</td>
<td>127,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
<td>67,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors 60+</td>
<td>59,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless People</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Population Segments</td>
<td>86,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 2016 Census Figures
NOTE: 100% poverty income cutoff for an individual in 2018 = $12,140*
Where Do Our Clients Live?

400,000 Statewide at or <100% of Poverty

- Small cities, towns, and rural Nevada: 40,000
- Reno / Sparks / Carson City: 60,000
- Las Vegas / North Las Vegas / Henderson: 300,000

- Based on 2016 Census Figures
- NOTE: 100% poverty income cutoff for an individual in 2018 = $12,140
- At the high end of the eligibility range for legal aid, 990,000 Nevadans have incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line
Population Trends: Poverty soared during the Great Recession... and then persisted after

2007-2011
Total Nevada Population
grew steadily through the Great Recession of 2007-11

2012
Poverty Population*
peaked at 67% above 2007

2016
Poverty persisted
remaining at 48% above 2007

2000: 195,000
2007: 270,000
2012: 450,000
2016: 400,000

*Poverty Population = Nevadans living at or below 100% Federal Poverty Income level
Some population segments grew by as much as 100% between 2007 and 2016

Population Trends for Selected Segments of the Low-income Population

Greatest Percentage Increase:
- Seniors: 100%
- Native Americans: 80%

Based on 2016 Census Figures
PROFILE
Nevada’s Five Core Legal Aid Providers

- OVERVIEW

- PROVIDERS
  - Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada
  - Nevada Legal Services
  - Southern Nevada Senior Law Program
  - Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans
  - Washoe Legal Services
OVERVIEW Legal Aid Provides Access to Our Civil Justice System for People Who Have Nowhere Else to Turn

35,000 legal cases completed in 2017

Nevada’s five core service providers comprise a network of non-profit law firms with a combined total of:

• **84** lawyers
• **28** paralegals
• **214** total staff
This may seem like a lot of lawyers, but to put it in perspective,

Nevada’s five core service providers:

• Have 84 lawyers to serve 400,000 Nevadans living at or below the poverty line.

• That’s about 1 lawyer for every 4,800 people

• That means we must turn away 1,000’s of people each year for lack of resources

• For those who can pay, there are 12 lawyers for every 4,800 people
Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada

Priorities

- Legal assistance to the general low-to-moderate-income population
- Specialized legal assistance to vulnerable populations: for example, children, seniors, and victims of domestic abuse
- Systemic legal advocacy
- Pro bono project
Nevada Legal Services

Priorities

• Legal assistance to the general low-income population
• Serves all 17 of Nevada’s counties
• 6 specialized law units – for example, Community Development, Consumer Action, and Indian Law

Local and national recognition from entities including the Legal Services Corporation, American Bar Association, HUD, and U.S.VETS
Southern Nevada Senior Law Program

Priorities

• Legal assistance to seniors age 60 and over

• Services provided in SNSLP office and in homes, hospices, and other settings

• Specialized law programs: Consumer Assistance, Estate Planning, and Healthcare

• Community legal education
Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans

Priorities

• Pro bono legal assistance for people with uncontested civil matters
• Domestic violence victim protection
• Immigration integration assistance to immigrant victims of domestic violence
Washoe Legal Services

Priorities

- Children in foster care
- Housing and consumer protection
- Senior law and adult guardianship
- Legal assistance for domestic violence victims in custody, divorce, and protective order proceedings
- Immigration legal assistance
- Legal clinics for assisting self-represented litigants
LEGAL NEEDS of Low-income Nevadans

How did we measure legal need?

How many legal problems occur among low-income Nevadans?

What types of legal problems do low-income people have?

What impact do they have on people’s lives?
How Did We Measure Legal Need?
The Survey of Low-Income Nevadans

The Sample
• 1,050 people were surveyed in October-December 2017

Methodology
• Face-to-face interviews
• Supervised, self-administered surveys
• Asked about legal problems in last 3 years

Locations - Places where low-income people gather
• Bus stops
• Senior centers
• Medical centers
• Dollar stores
How Many Legal Problems Occur Among Low-Income Nevadans?

- On average, for every 100 households in Nevada with incomes at or below 125% of poverty, 74 legal problems were experienced in 2016.
- This translates to 147,000 problems/year among Nevada households at < 125% of poverty level:
  - 262,000 at < 200%
  - 236,000 at < 175%
  - 182,000 at < 150%
  - 106,000 at < 100%
- Nevada’s core legal aid providers closed 35,000 “cases” (1 problem/case) in 2016 – a lot... but still only 24% of the legal problems arising that year at or < 125%.

Eviction is one of the situations identified as legal problems by respondents in the survey.
Where Do the Problems Occur?

147,000 Legal Problems/Year Statewide

32,000
Reno / Sparks / Carson City Area

12,000
Small cities, towns, and rural Nevada counties

103,000
Las Vegas / North Las Vegas / Henderson

*Based on 2016 Census Figures <125% of Poverty*
### Legal Problems in Nevada by LEGAL ISSUE

**147,000 Total Problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Issue</th>
<th>Number of Problems per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income &amp; Employment</td>
<td>36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, Juvenile, &amp; Education</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Issues</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE JUSTICE BARRIER in Nevada

The Disparity Between Need and Capacity

Justice Barrier by Issue

Where People Go When They Have a Legal Problem

Justice Barrier by Region
The Justice Barrier
The Disparity Between Need and Capacity

- **Need**: 147,000 problems/yr. among Nevada households at < 125% of poverty
- **Capacity**: 35,000 problems/yr. addressed with help from legal aid lawyers or paralegals
- **Disparity**: 112,000 problems/yr. for which people do NOT get help

76% of the total legal needs go **unmet**
Survey Finding: Where Nevadans Go When They Have a Legal Problem

A. Have Problem

100 Households with a legal problem

35 seek help

B. Seek Help

19

LEGAL AID

5 Not Accepted

9 served by Legal Aid only

5 Served by Legal Aid & also go to others

16

OTHER PROVIDERS such as:
- Paid private lawyers
- Pro bono lawyers
- Court info programs

21 served by Legal Aid and others

C. Get Help

30 Helped

70 Don’t Get Help

65 don’t seek help
Justice Barrier in Nevada by REGION

112,000 Problems for Which People Do Not Get Help

- **8,000**
  Northern small cities, towns, and rural counties

- **22,000**
  Reno / Sparks / Carson City

- **3,000**
  Southern small cities, towns, and rural counties

- **79,000**
  Las Vegas / North Las Vegas / Henderson
Justice Barrier...
Income and Employment

- Food stamps: 9,930
- Disability Benefits: 7,200
- SSI (Supplemental Security Income): 5,240
- Unemployment compensation: 2,630
- Cash assistance: 2,830
- Workplace discrimination: 1,600
- Disability insurance policy: 1,560
- Medical or family leave: 1,550
- Not getting paid when you should: 1,460
- Veterans benefits: 750
- Other Income & Employment: 0

Bar chart showing the disparity between total need and actual cases for each category.
Implications of Unmet Need For Legal Help With Denial of Disability Benefits

**WITHOUT Legal Help, People...**
- Are unaware of legal rights
- Have difficulty navigating the complex appeal process
- Usually give up or lose
- Continue in poverty

**WITH Legal Help, People Can...**
- Exercise legal rights
- File a timely legal appeal
- Win their appeal (80% success)
- Get an income stream averaging $830/mo. for 11 years...
  - $109,000 total
Types of Legal Problems in Nevada

**Housing**

- Eviction/lock-out from private rental housing: 2,920
- Inadequate income to make rent or house payments: 2,170
- Other rental housing problems: 1,040
- Mortgage foreclosure: 1,160
- Fraudulent real estate transaction: 920
- Eviction/lock-out from public rental housing: 400
- Housing subsidy: 400
- Habitability: 400
- Discrimination in renting: 600
- Homeowners association: 600
- Other Housing: 600

2017 Cases

Gap/Disparity: Total Need minus 2017 Cases

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28
Implications of Unmet Need For Legal Help With Eviction Notice

**WITHOUT Legal Help, People...**

- ✓ Miss work and schooling
- ✓ Usually lose by default
- ✓ Are unaware of programs that could help
- ✓ Have children’s schooling disrupted
- ✓ Wind up couch-surfing or in shelters

**WITH Legal Help, People Can...**

- ✓ Get time to seek alternative housing
- ✓ Stay at work
- ✓ Access emergency assistance programs
- ✓ Keep children in their own school
- ✓ Avoid homelessness
Justice Barrier...

Family, Juvenile, & Education

- Child support: 6,030
- Child custody: 4,600
- Domestic violence: 3,730
- Divorce: 2,760
- Children and youth services: 1,510
- Child guardianship: 1,110
- Sexual violence: 1,020
- Special education: 660
- Adult guardianship: 740
- Spousal support: 320
- Elder abuse
- Other Family, Juvenile, & Education

2017 Cases
Gap/Disparity: Total Need minus 2017 Cases
**Implications of Unmet Need For Legal Help With Domestic Violence**

### WITHOUT Legal Help, People...

- Continue in abusive situations  
  - ✓ Miss work  
  - ✓ Lose their jobs and income  
  - ✓ Can’t pay rent and lose their homes  
  - ✓ Have children’s schooling disrupted  
  - ✓ Struggle with addiction  
- Are unaware of programs that could help

### WITH Legal Help, People Can...

- Get independence from abuser  
  - ✓ Order of Protection  
  - ✓ Custody of children  
  - ✓ Child support  
  - ✓ Divorce  
  - ✓ Show up at work and school  
- Get referrals to housing, employment, education and other support programs
Justice Barrier...

Health

- Health insurance: 5,870
- Medicaid issues: 5,450
- Medical expenses: 4,470
- Prescription drug benefits: 3,560
- Medicare issues: 3,160
- Illness of spouse/family member: 2,580
- Denial of medical care: 1,980
- Nursing home rights: 1,980
- Other Health: 0

Gap/Disparity: Total Need minus 2017 Cases

2017 Cases: 2,000

0 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000 10,000 12,000
Justice Barrier...

Consumer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>2017 Cases</th>
<th>Gap/Disparity: Total Need minus 2017 Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car repair</td>
<td>3,810</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility shut off</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt collection</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payday/title loan</td>
<td>3,010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone, mail or Internet scams</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity theft</td>
<td>2,820</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Repossession</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garnishment of wages</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankruptcy</td>
<td>830</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Consumer/Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Justice Barrier...

Other Issues

- Wills, advance directives, legal/medical documents
- Criminal record as a barrier to employment
- Immigration/naturalization
- Probate
- Wanting to avoid probate
- Other Miscellaneous

2017 Cases
Gap/Disparity: Total Need minus 2017 Cases

- Wills, advance directives, legal/medical documents: 2,880
- Criminal record as a barrier to employment: 2,310
- Immigration/naturalization: 1,350
- Probate: 670
- Wanting to avoid probate: 320
- Other Miscellaneous: 2,880
ECONOMIC BENEFITS of Reducing the Justice Barrier

The Bottom Line
Cost Savings
Where the Impacts Come From
Income for Low-Income Clients
The Multiplier Impact on Communities
Pro Bono Contribution by the Private Bar
The Bottom Line
2016 Estimated Impact of Legal Aid in Nevada: $128 Million
A $7 return for every $1 in funding
Where the Impacts Come From:

- **Income for low-income households** $40M
  Legal aid cuts barriers keeping people in poverty

- **Cost savings** $38M
  Legal aid saves money

- **Multiplier impact on communities** $50M
  Spending by clients provides new revenue for businesses and creates jobs
Income for Clients
Legal Aid Secured **$40M** for Clients, Comprised of

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) – **$25M**
- Medicare & Medicaid reimbursements – **$8M**
- Veterans benefits – **$5M**
- Child support – **$2M**
How the Study Quantified the Income Received by Clients

EXAMPLE: *SSI and SS Disability Income*

A. OUTCOMES: 217
Clients Obtained SS Benefits

B. INCOME: $115,000
Net Present Value per Outcome

C. TOTAL INCOME: $25 Million

DATA & ESTIMATES FROM PROVIDERS’ OUTCOME MEASURES*

MULTIPLIERS FROM EXTERNAL STUDIES/LOCAL DATA*

COMPUTATIONS OUTCOMES X SAVINGS / OUTCOME

* See final report and appendices for documentation of data sources and assumptions used in the analysis.
Cost Savings
Legal Aid Saved $38M for Clients and Other Stakeholders in 2016 by

- Preventing domestic violence thereby reducing emergency medical treatment and law enforcement costs ($4M savings)

- Avoiding foreclosure thereby avoiding costs to clients, neighbors, lenders, and local governments ($12M savings)

- Preventing eviction thereby avoiding costs of emergency shelter ($4M savings)

- Providing advanced directives avoiding unwanted medical treatments ($18M savings)
How the Study Quantified the Cost Savings

EXAMPLE *Preventing Domestic Violence*

Legal Aid Cases in Which Domestic Violence Was Involved in 2016

A. OUTCOMES: **1,011**
   Clients Avoided DV

B. SAVINGS: **$4,195**
   per Outcome

C. TOTAL SAVINGS: **$4.2 Million**

*See final report and appendices for documentation of data sources and assumptions used in the analysis.*
Multiplier Impact on Nevada Communities: $50M

How the Study Estimated the Multiplier Impact

**Revenue**
flows into Nevada from the Federal government as a direct outcome of legal aid’s operations totaling...

$40 Million in federal benefits and grants
- $29M SSDI, SSI, and veterans benefits to clients
- $7M in Medicare & Federal share (50%) of Medicaid
- $4M in Federal grants to legal aid programs

**Spending**
of these federal dollars locally provides income for business and wages for working Nevadans amounting to...

$40 Million in total spending, consisting of...
- $29M by low-income families for:
  - Food
  - Rent
  - Prescriptions
  - Utilities and other necessities
- $11M by health care and legal aid providers for:
  - Wages
  - Space
  - Supplies and other expenses

**Multiplier Impact**
Every federal dollar in spending circulates 1.23 times* in Nevada’s local economies, for a total of...

$50 Million in additional economic impact...
- **Income** for local businesses
- **376 jobs**

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*Computed by The Resource based on low-income household spending patterns using U.S. Department of Commerce RIMS II input-output model and Nevada data.
Pro Bono Contribution by the Private Bar
Nevada private Lawyers Contributed More than $6M Worth of Billable Time in 2017 Serving Low-income Clients

- Total hours contributed in 2017 by lawyers participating in pro bono programs of Nevada legal aid providers – 30,600
- Estimated market value per billable hour – $200
- Estimated total value of donated services – $6.1M
SOLUTIONS: Five Strategies For Reducing the Justice Barrier

Reset Priorities
Enhance Multi-Tiered Service Delivery System
Innovate to Do More with Less
Form Collaborative Partnerships
Increase Funding
Five Strategies
for Reducing the Justice Barrier in Nevada

1. Reset Priorities
Accept/Refocus on
• Most urgent problems, or
• Problems of greatest impact, or
• Problems affecting the most people, or
...All of the above
**Five Strategies, continued**

2. Enhance Multi-Tiered Service Delivery System

800 toll-free telephone and/or web intake

Refers applicants to lowest-cost legal service that addresses need

- **Tier 1** Self Help Center for self-represented litigants
- **Tier 2** Advice-only and brief legal services unit
- **Tier 3** Specialized legal aid unit – Housing, Family, etc.
- **Tier 4** Systemic “impact” advocacy unit or program
Five Strategies, continued

3. Innovate to do More with Less

*Seek partners and funders* to invest in

- **Courthouse Self-Help Centers** statewide equipped with technology, paralegals, and/or lawyers
- **Streamlined court processes** – forms, procedures, E-file systems
- **Systems using videoconferencing (e.g. Skype)** to serve clients in remote areas
- **Web-based intake** as an adjunct to toll-free phone systems and walk-in intake
Five Strategies, continued

4. Form Collaborative Partnerships – for example

- Medical/Legal Aid
- Human Service Providers/Legal Aid
- Government/Legal Aid
- Business/Legal Aid
- Financial Institution/Legal Aid
Five Strategies, continued

5. Increase Funding to
   • Hire more LEGAL AID lawyers
   • Recruit, train, and support more PRO BONO lawyers
   • Recruit, train, and support more PARALEGALS and legally-trained VOLUNTEERS
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

What Our Stakeholders Say
Stakeholder Meetings Were Held in Six Locations Across Nevada

What We Heard – a Very Quick Summary:

- **Housing / Affordability** is the #1 unmet need
- **Eviction Defense** is a need related to the above that was identified by many participants
- **Custody** is also a big issue... Might be donors for this
- **Income / SSDI / SSI /Government Benefits** is another huge unmet need that many flagged
- **Other compelling needs:**
  - Immigration/deportation
  - Domestic violence
  - Education/special education access/discipline issues
Summary of the Stakeholder Meetings

Common Refrains...

Stakeholders’ Feedback From the Meetings Highlighted Needs for:

- More public outreach
- Capacity to serve more clients
- More lawyers
- More collaboration between courts and legal aid
- Taking education/services into the community/neighborhood events
- Exploring technology options for legal aid delivery
OPPORTUNITIES
We See for...

• Expanding REACH and IMPACT of Legal Aid

• Expanding RESOURCES for Narrowing the Justice Barrier
### Opportunities for Expanding REACH and IMPACT

#### Actions PROVIDERS can take

- **Priorities**: Re-set priorities to address most compelling problems in alignment with program’s mission
- **Delivery System**: Collaborate with other providers to maximize performance of seamless intake and multi-tiered service delivery system in areas served jointly
- **Collaborative Initiatives**: Seek funding for collaborative partnerships with non-legal entities serving low-income people
- **Innovation**: Incorporate innovations proven in Nevada and elsewhere

#### Actions THE COMMUNITY can take

- **Market Legal Aid**: Apply findings of Study to reach out to major funders with a powerful case for expanded funding of legal aid
- **Strategic Action**: Launch planning for 1-3 statewide initiatives to identify and grasp low-hanging fruit revealed by the Study
A Concrete Outcome of the Study:
OUTLINES of SIX FUNDABLE INITIATIVES

• From NLS:
  o **Eviction Defense**: A Collaborative Effort Providing Free Legal Aid for All Tenants Facing Eviction in Urban Southern Nevada
  o **Income**: A Project to Address the “Justice Barrier” in Food Stamps, Disability Benefits, and SSI Benefits in Nevada

• From LACSN:
  o **Children and Education**: A Collaborative Effort Addressing the “Justice Barrier” in Children and Education in Southern Nevada

• From SNSLP:
  o **Seniors**: Planning for Incapacity for the Senior Population in Southern Nevada

• From VARN:
  o **Rural Outreach**: Community Awareness of Legal Aid in Rural Nevada

• From WLS:
  o **Adult Guardianship and Child Advocacy**: A Project to Address the “Justice Barrier” in Adult Guardianship and Child Advocacy Representation in Rural Northern Nevada
CONCLUSION

The Justice Barrier Presents a Challenge... And an Opportunity