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A Crisis in Legal Representation

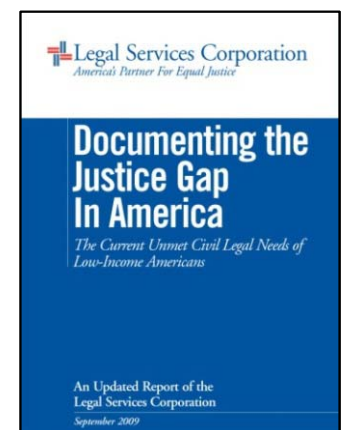
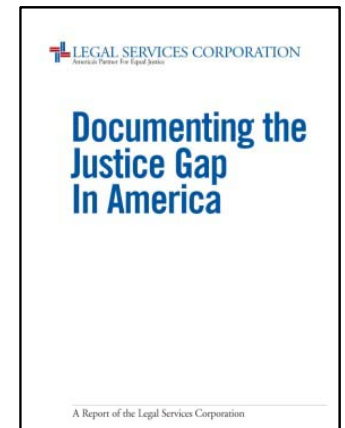


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The Justice Gap

LSC issued reports on the Justice Gap in 2005 and 2009 describing a crisis in representation. The reports relied on three methodologies:

- "Unable to Serve" Survey
- State Legal Needs Studies
- Attorneys Per Capita Analysis





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Unable to Serve

LSC grantees counted the number of eligible people who sought legal help in person, by telephone or online for problems and were denied services because the grantee lacked sufficient resources. The chief finding:

For every client served by a grantee, at least one eligible person seeking help was turned down because of limited resources.



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State Legal Needs Studies

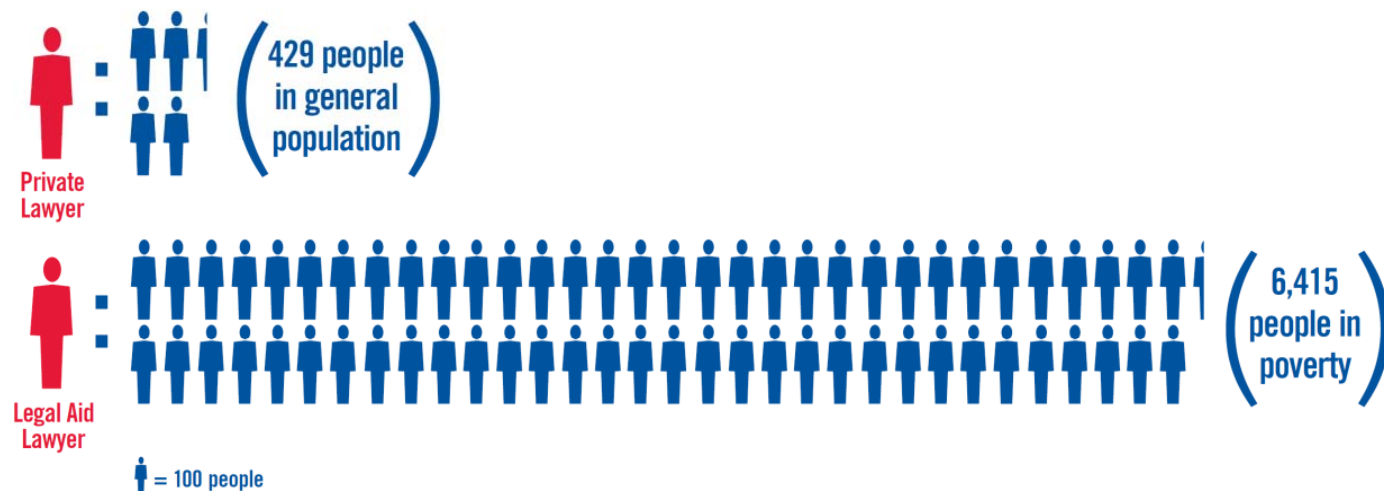
The Justice Gap reports examined 16 state studies conducted since 2000. Most were based on random telephone surveys and “cluster sampling” techniques. The surveys showed that, on average, low-income households experience from 1-to-3 legal problems per year, and that roughly 1-in-5 were addressed with the assistance of a lawyer.



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Attorneys Per Capita

Data show there is only one legal aid attorney available for every 6,415 low-income persons, and one private attorney providing personal legal services for every 429 persons in the general population who are above the LSC eligibility threshold. Roughly 53 percent of all legal aid attorneys work in LSC-funded programs.





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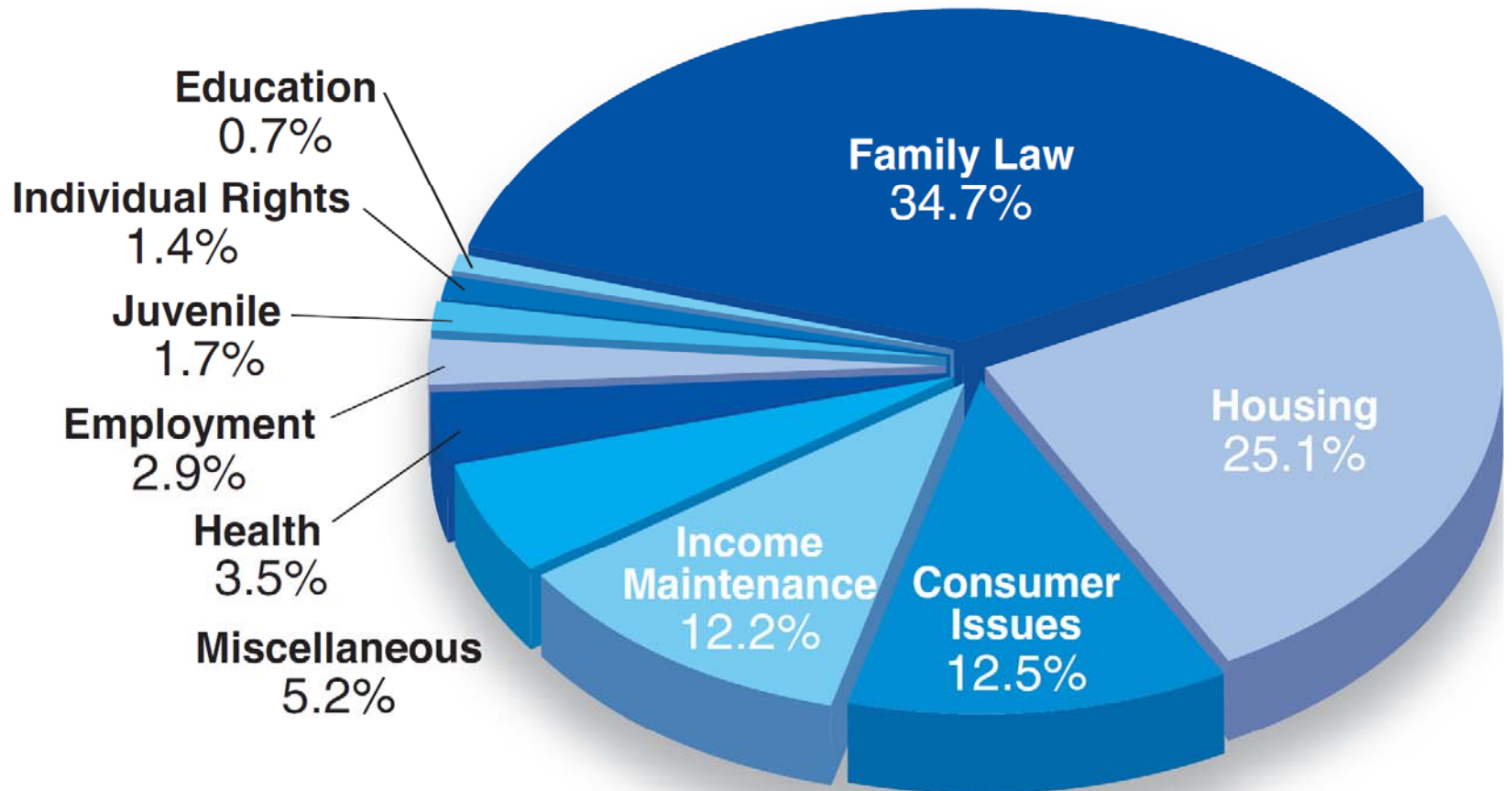
Unrepresented Litigants

The 2009 Justice Gap Report included information on the self-represented and noted there is no national compilation of statistics. However, available data show that self-representation is growing, and unrepresented litigants are often in courts in which low-income people are likely to appear, such as family and housing courts.



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Cases Closed by LSC Grantees



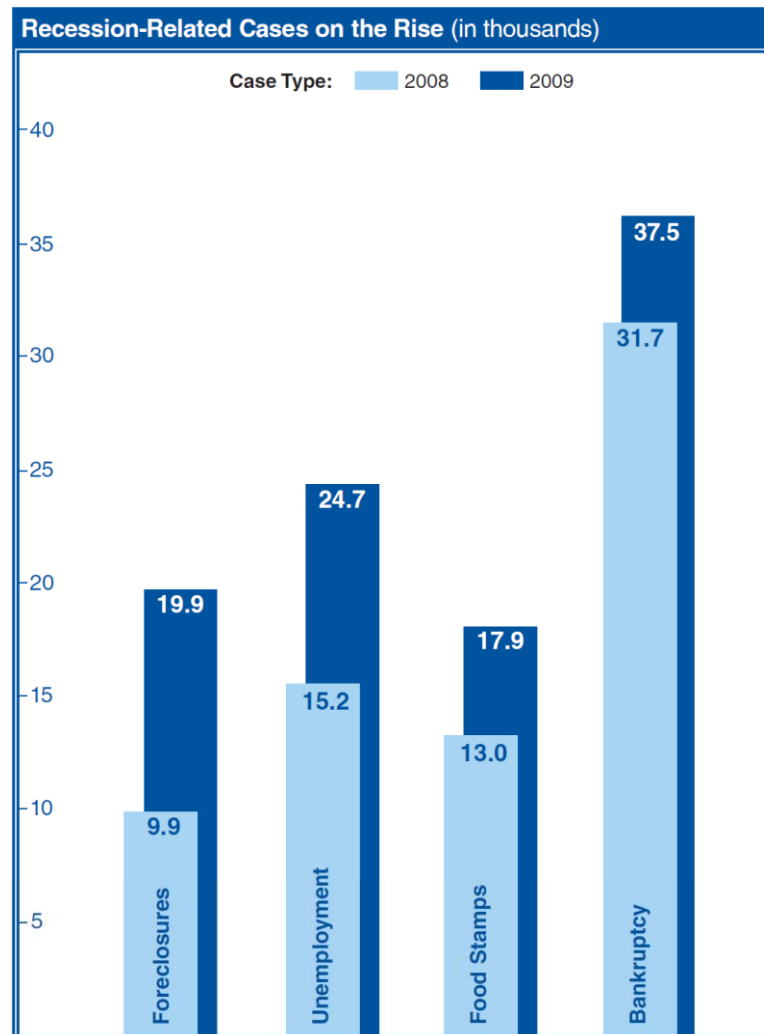


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Increasing Poverty

Census Bureau data show that about 54 million Americans qualified for LSC-funded services in 2008--about 3 million more than in 2007. Because of the continuing high unemployment rate this year, it is likely that the number of Americans eligible for LSC grantee services will continue to rise. The next Census Bureau poverty snapshot will be issued this fall.

Impact of the Weak Economy





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Income and Poverty

- A Pew Research study this year found 55 percent of adults in the labor force had suffered a period of unemployment, experienced a cut in pay or a reduction in hours, or could only find part-time work.
- A Brookings Institution study this year portrays the suburbs as home to the fastest growing and largest poor population in the nation.



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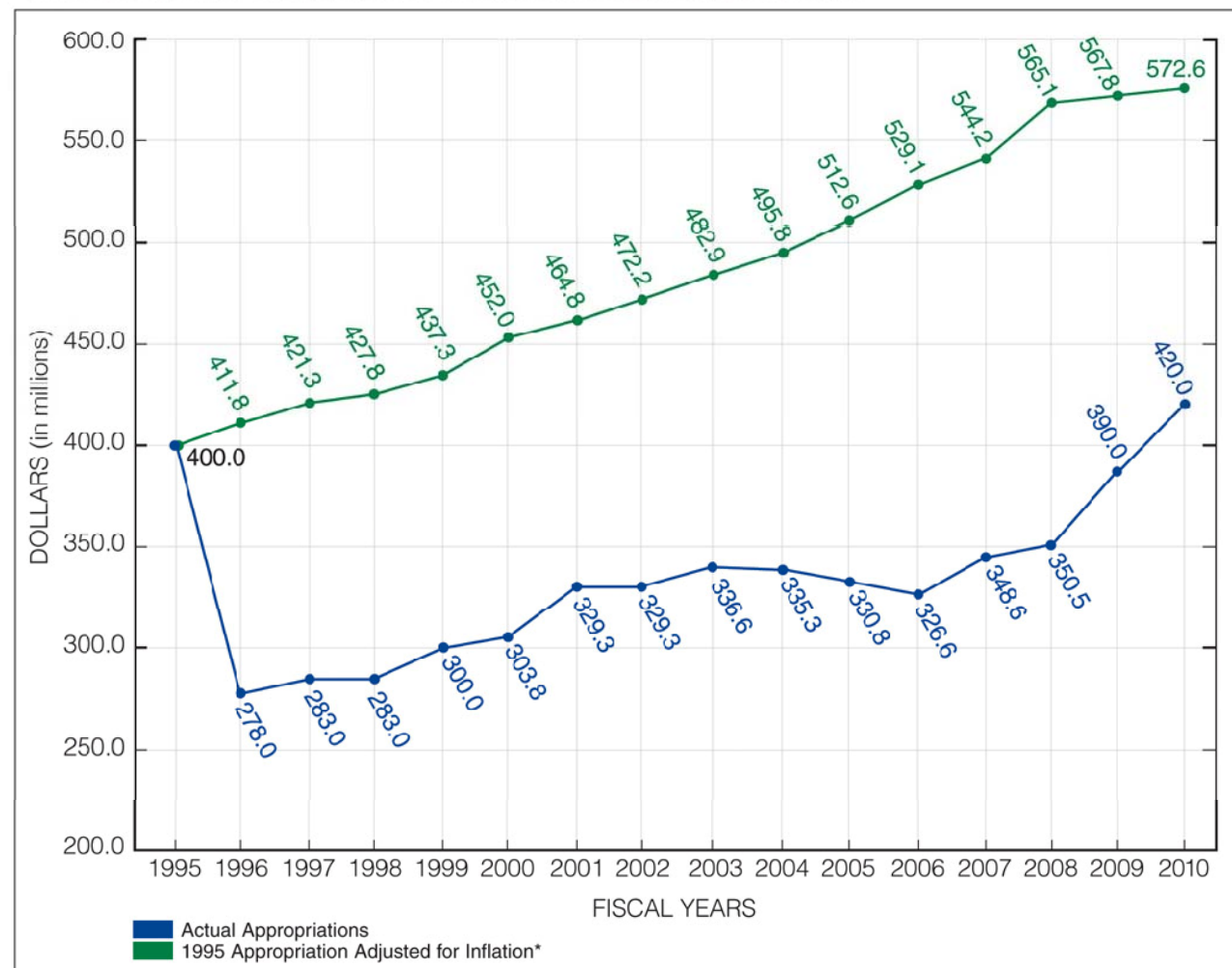
Domestic Violence

A 2004 National Institute of Justice study found that women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods were more than twice as likely to be victims compared with women in more advantaged neighborhoods. A 2003 economic study describes access to legal aid as the most effective public service that reduces domestic abuse over the long term.



LSC Appropriations

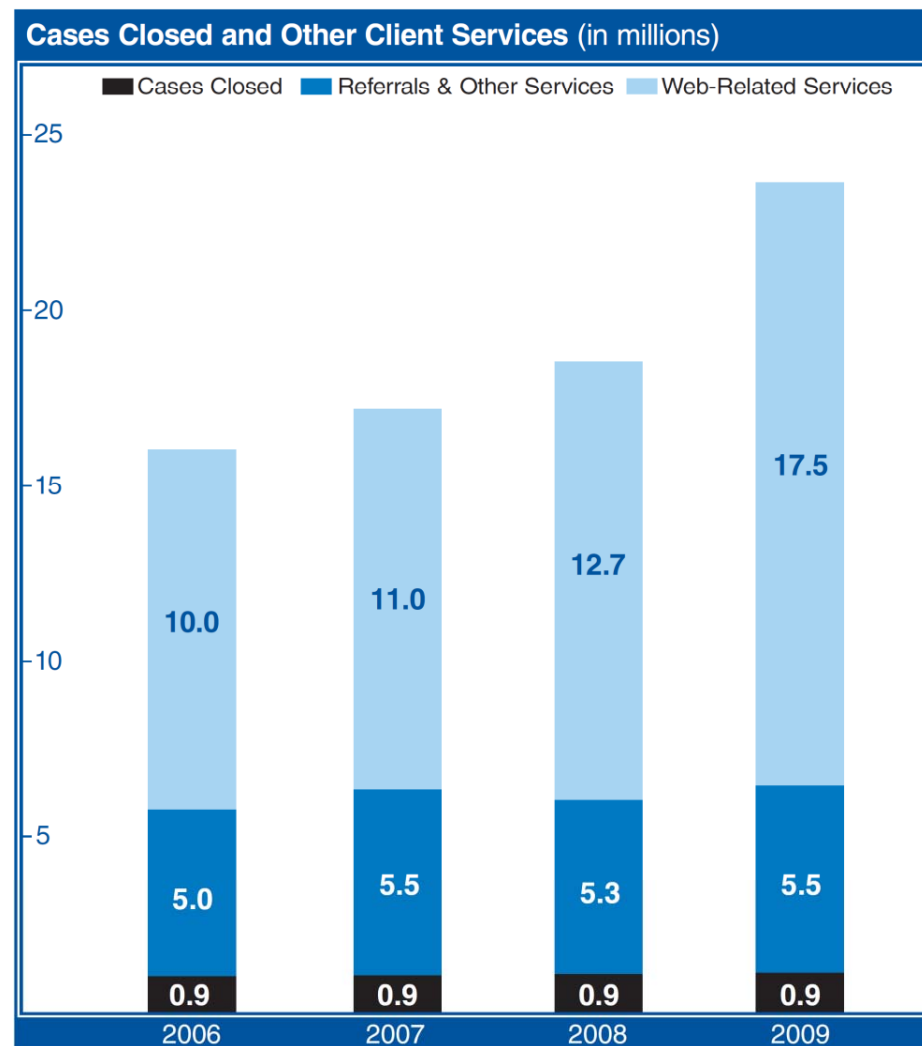
LSC's Appropriation Compared to Its 1995 Inflation-Adjusted Appropriation





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Increasing Client Services





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Pro Bono: We Must Do More

- Effective engagement of private attorneys in the delivery of LSC-funded services is a value embedded in LSC programs.
- Grantees are required to expend 12.5 percent of their grant on private attorney involvement.
- LSC Board of Directors supports increasing private attorney involvement.
- Cases closed by private attorneys increased 11.4 percent from 2008 to 2009, with private lawyers closing nearly 104,000 cases nationwide last year.
- The need for legal services far surpasses what is available, and pro bono services to low-income people are critical to helping close the Justice Gap.



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The Power of Partnerships

- Access to Justice Commissions: LSC has encouraged their creation, highlighted the importance of integrated statewide legal assistance delivery systems and urged local legal aid programs to participate in the work of commissions.
- Law schools: About 200 law schools have clinical programs serving indigent clients, and LSC encourages grantees to collaborate with law school clinics.
- Disaster planning: LSC works with FEMA, the Red Cross, ABA, NLADA and Pro Bono Net to serve as a clearinghouse for legal information and resources.
- Medical-legal partnerships: More than 40 LSC grantees work with health-care teams to improve overall health outcomes for low-income families and children and help avert future legal problems.
- Foreclosure initiatives: Many LSC grantees have joined with local and state groups to address the foreclosure crisis and related housing issues, including those designed to keep families in their homes.



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Leveraging Technology

- Since 2000, LSC's Technology Initiative Grants program has supported the use of technology to reach more of those who need civil legal assistance and to provide self-help options for those that grantees cannot serve.
- For pro bono: Legal Services of North Florida used FloridaProBono.org to recruit pro bono lawyers for the Florida Attorneys Saving Homes project and signed up 1,409 new volunteer attorneys.
- For documents: LawHelp Interactive uses interview prompts to help low-income people fill out state court forms. In the second quarter of 2010, LawHelp provided 99,881 interviews and assembled 51,730 documents.
- For efficiency: Pine Tree Legal Assistance developed an online intake system for the Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project, allowing volunteers to conduct up to 70 percent of the program intakes and transfer the information to a case management system, saving staff time of 15 minutes per intake.



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Going Forward

- The weak economy has increased requests for legal services at LSC programs. It has also created stresses for legal aid programs, in part because of the decline in IOLTA and the uncertainty about state, local and charitable contributions.
- Pro bono efforts and technology projects must be expanded substantially in coming years, but even if accomplished will not be enough to address increases in the poverty population and the unmet need for legal services.
- New ways of funding and supporting civil legal assistance must be found. These new approaches must include federal, state and local funders, the courts, the organized bar, individual lawyers, foundations, charitable donors and other concerned private parties.
- The federal government must continue to play a vital role in providing a pathway to equal justice for all, consistent with its role in maintaining the formal civil justice system and providing an orderly forum for the resolution of disputes.



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Legal Services Corporation
Victor M. Fortuno, President

3333 K Street NW

Washington, D.C. 20007

202-295-1500

www.lsc.gov