



Legal Aid Provides For Fairness and Justice

Civil legal aid in Oregon ensures fairness in the justice system. It provides critical help to low-income and vulnerable Oregonians when faced with a legal matter to protect their livelihood, their health and safety, and their families.

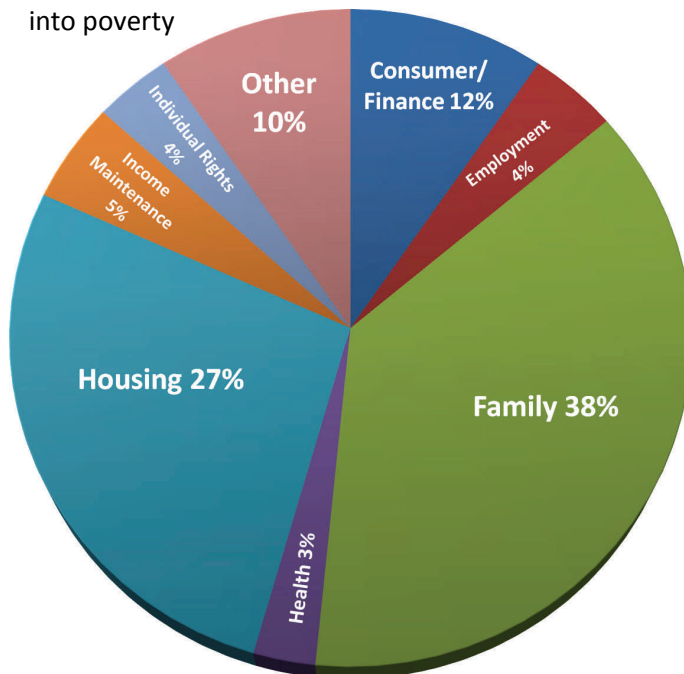
When low income Oregonians lack the resources for needed legal help, they are effectively shut out of the justice system.

To the average person, our legal system is a maze—that's why lawyers are trained to guide their clients through the system. Legal aid provides free civil legal services to more than 20,000 poor and elderly Oregonians each year who have no where else to turn for legal help.



Legal Aid Provides

- Free civil legal services to low-income and elderly Oregonians
- Brochures, court forms and self-help materials to help people navigate our justice system
- A website with accessible legal information available to all Oregonians
- Help to victims of domestic violence and their children to keep them safe
- Resources to help stabilize families and prevent a further slide into poverty



The above chart shows what types of cases legal aid handles. Note that 65% of cases involve physical safety and keeping safe housing.

The Campaign for Equal Justice, founded by Oregon lawyers in 1991, supports Oregon's legal aid programs. Four non-profit corporations work together as a part of an integrated delivery system designed to provide relatively equal access statewide: two statewide programs, Legal Aid Services of Oregon and the Oregon Law Center; two county wide programs, Lane County Legal Aid and Advocacy Center, and the Center for Non-profit Legal Services (Jackson County).

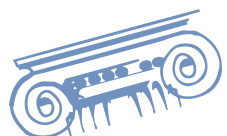
Oregon's Justice Gap

There is currently funding to meet 15% of the civil legal needs of the poor.

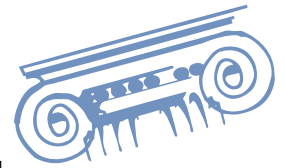
Resources have not kept pace with the increase in poverty

- Between 2000 and 2011, poverty in Oregon increased by 61.5%—the 8th highest increase in the nation.
- Between 2009 and 2012, funding cuts to legal aid forced the closure of two offices and a 20% reduction in staff across the state.

The **Task Force on Legal Aid Funding**, which included elected officials and leaders in the legal community, concluded that we need to double the resources for Oregon's legal aid programs in order to have minimally adequate funding. Funding for legal aid is a state, federal and private partnership. Increased revenue needs to come from a number of different sources. For more information, see reverse side and <http://www.cej-oregon.org/taskforce.php>.



Legal Aid Looks Out For Oregonians In Need.



“Marie” used her body to shield her children, Joey, age two, and Sara, age three (not pictured), from her abusive husband, taking the brunt of his abuse. She saw Joey and Sara’s fear and distress and wanted to break free, but she needed help. Legal aid helped Marie obtain a restraining order and temporary custody. Her message to other survivors of domestic violence is, “it’s not easy, but there is help and hope.” Today, Marie is on the road to stabilizing life for herself and her children.



In nearly 60% of DV cases, children see or hear violence in the home. Witnessing violence has a significant negative impact on children.

“Fatima” came to the US for a marriage arranged by her family. Her husband was physically abusive and kept her as a prisoner in her home; she was not allowed to leave unless he accompanied her. She knew she needed to get away, but was not sure how to do it. She saved up quarters from doing laundry and one day was able to escape. She took a bus to the only building she had been to downtown – the immigration building. They referred her to legal aid, who helped with her divorce and obtaining custody of her son. She is now raising her son in a safe household and is no longer held back from fulfilling her dream of becoming a nurse.



80% of clients are women, most with children to support.

“Marisol” works full time at a day care center and has four little boys.

Faced with low wages and a tight rental market, the best apartment she could afford was in poor condition. It had roaches, rats, and the stove sparked, so she was afraid to cook. She asked the landlord to fix the problems, and he responded with an eviction notice. Marisol



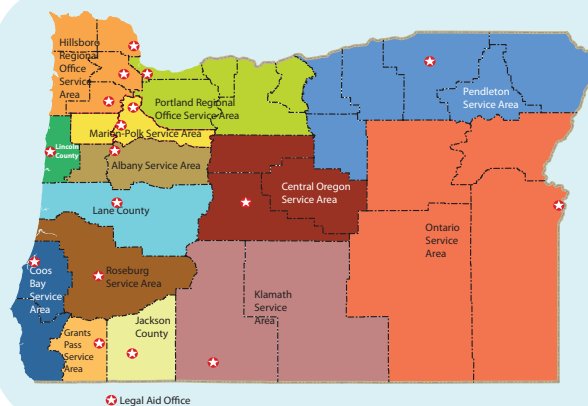
knew that wasn’t right, but she couldn’t get the landlord to listen to her. Then a co-worker suggested calling legal aid. Legal aid negotiated an agreement with her landlord, including cleanup and repairs. The landlord followed through, and now Marisol and the boys have a clean, safe place to live.

27% of cases relate to housing.



“Allen and Penny” are 63, married, and have grown children. After working for a large company for almost 20 years, Allen was “downsized.” Allen received unemployment benefits for about a year while he looked for a job, then decided they eventually be living off of Social Security. Since that wouldn’t be enough to pay the mortgage, he decided to cash out his pension and pay off the mortgage so they could keep their home. He reported the pension distribution to the state. Then they got some bad news: the Employment Department said he’d have to pay back all the unemployment benefits. Worse, Penny had just been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. Legal aid successfully challenged the case on the basis that Allen was a dislocated worker—an exception to retirement distributions. Today, the mortgage is paid off, and Penny is in remission. Allen said “We are

just very thankful that legal aid existed...[Representing myself] would have been like trying to cure myself of cancer without the help of physicians and surgeons.” **Our legal system is complex and can be like a maze for non-lawyers.**



- Legal aid provides free civil legal services to poor and vulnerable Oregonians in all 36 Oregon counties.
- Because the need is so great, legal aid takes cases where legal help is essential to making sure families can meet their basic needs: food, shelter, medical care and physical safety.
- About 40% of legal aid’s cases are family law cases in which there is domestic violence. About one quarter are housing cases. Other subject matter areas include consumer law, income maintenance (social security, unemployment insurance, and other self-sufficiency benefits), health, employment, and individual rights.

Learn more at www.cej-oregon.org.