

Economic Impact and Social Return on Investment of Civil Legal Aid Services for Louisiana

(fiscal year 2016)



Civil legal aid is free legal advice, representation or other legal assistance provided to low-income and vulnerable people who cannot otherwise afford legal help. The responsibility for meeting the civil legal needs of Louisiana's poor falls primarily on a network of nonprofit, civil legal aid providers who serve our poorest citizens with free civil legal assistance. Declines in federal and state funding combined with Louisiana's high poverty, place our already challenged civil legal aid system in crisis.

At the request of the Louisiana Legislature, the Access to Justice Commission conducted an Economic Impact and Social Return on Investment Analysis, funded by the Louisiana Bar Foundation. The study included data from 39 civil legal aid providers. Social return on investment (SROI) is an internationally standardized and accepted process for measuring and understanding the financial impact of social services organizations.

For every \$1 invested in Louisiana's civil legal aid services, these programs deliver \$8.73 in immediate and long-term consequential financial benefits.

The net economic impact value resulting from Louisiana civil legal activities during the 2016 fiscal year totaled \$93,977,000.

The total net social return on investment for Louisiana's civil legal aid programs during the 2016 fiscal year was 873%.

“This Analysis shows that dollars spent on Louisiana's civil legal aid providers are well spent and deliver unmistakable *economic returns to the state.*

Continued funding of the civil legal aid providers will provide a substantial impact to the state.” - Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson, Louisiana Supreme Court

Highlights

Total number of families served in Louisiana during fiscal year 2016	26,437
Total net value of services	\$93,977,000
Total tax-based funding for Louisiana civil legal aid operations	\$10,761,000*
Social impact return on investment	873%

* Funding includes \$4,675,055 from the Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) and \$6,086,417 from the Federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC). The LBF is the largest state funder of civil legal aid and has distributed more than \$71.2 million throughout Louisiana to help address the legal needs of indigent citizens. In 2016, the LBF awarded \$6.3 million to 63 civil legal aid providers and public interest attorneys. LSC is a nonprofit established by Congress to provide financial support for civil legal aid to low-income Americans in every state.

Investing in civil legal aid is a powerful way to help people solve critical problems and prevent events that are personally harmful and expensive for society. Schools, businesses, government agencies and the state as a whole benefit from resolving civil legal problems.



The **Access to Justice Commission** is a collaboration between the Louisiana Supreme Court, Louisiana State Bar Association and the Louisiana Bar Foundation. The Commission is committed to assuring that Louisianans, regardless of their economic circumstance, have access to equal justice under the law.

Louisiana's civil legal aid organizations assisted in 26,437 legal matters. Services were provided in over 100 types of civil legal problems.

Major areas of services and types of legal matters

Family Law

domestic violence
divorce
custody and visitation
guardianship/adoption
disaster

Housing

homeownership
foreclosure
federally subsidized housing
landlord/tenant discrimination

Community Support

education
employment
mental health
disabilities
immigration

Health Care

Medicaid
Medicare
private insurance
home health care

Public Benefits

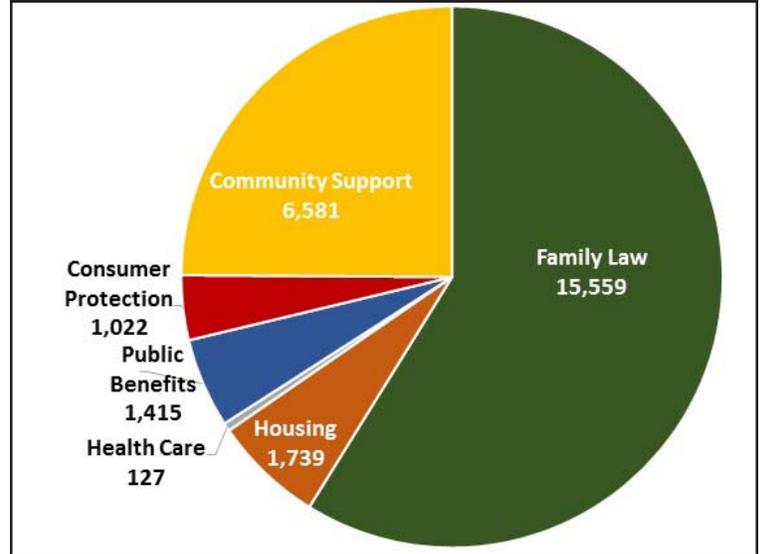
social security
Medicare
Medicaid
food stamps
unemployment

Consumer Protection

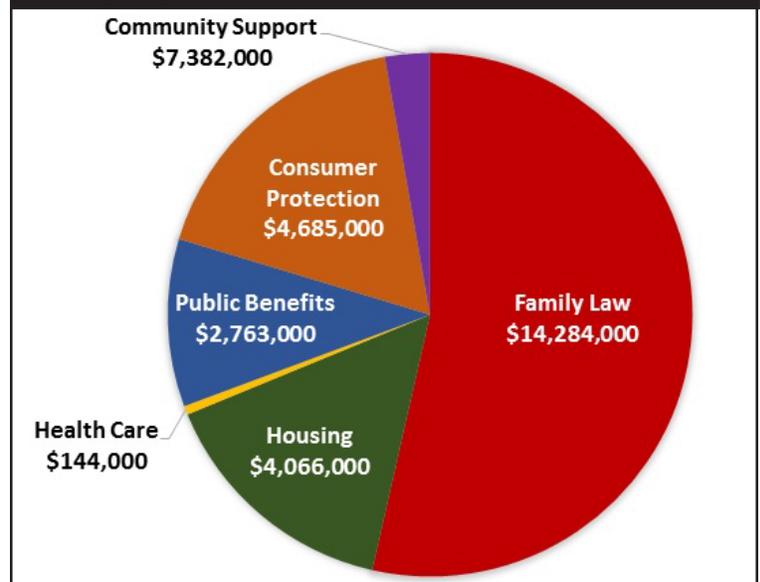
bankruptcy
debt wage garnishments
tax issues
debt collections
repossessions

2016 Outcomes

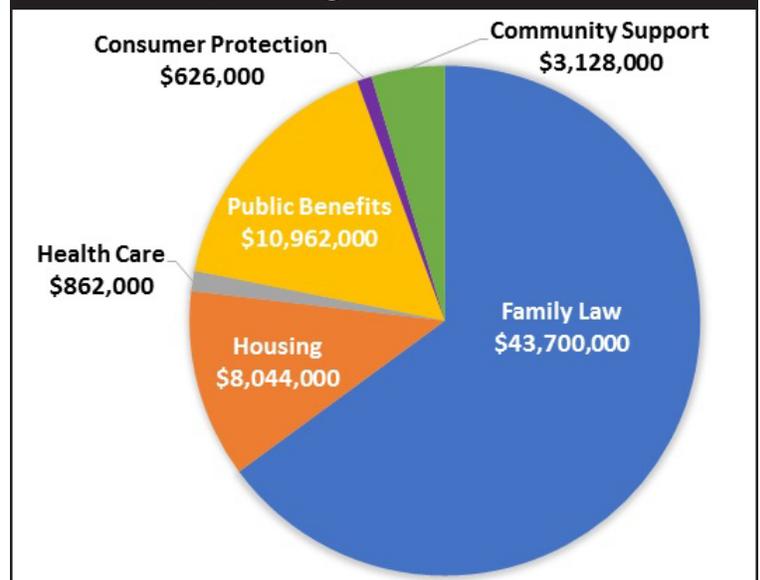
26,437 Families Served



\$33,324,000 Immediate Direct Financial Benefits



\$67,322,000 Long-term Financial Benefits



About Community Services Analysis LLC

Community Services Analysis LLC is the leading provider of Social Return on Investment Analysis (SROI) in the United States, having completed over 100 economic impact and SROI studies for local and state agencies around the country, and is recognized as the exclusive SROI national partner of the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association.