



The Legal Services Corporation: Ensuring Fairness for All in the Justice System

LSC is an integral part of fulfilling our nation's fundamental promise of equal access to justice for all Americans

- Fairness in the justice system should not depend on how much money a person has.
- LSC provides access to legal help for people to protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families. The people who depend on LSC-funded legal aid organizations include women and children victimized by domestic violence; veterans struggling after returning from combat; disabled and elderly persons who have been financially exploited and abused; and many other vulnerable Americans.
- Legal aid is consistently one of the top referrals for local congressional offices serving constituent needs.

LSC funding is near an all-time low while a record number of vulnerable and disadvantaged Americans are in need of these services

- Since 1981, the number of Americans eligible for legal aid has increased by more than 50% to a record of more than 60 million people, yet Congress now allocates over 50% *less* in funding for LSC than it did in 1981 after adjusting for inflation.
- As a result, more than half of people in need of legal aid are turned away due to lack of resources.
- The legal community is doing its part, providing more than two million hours of pro bono service and donating more than \$15 million each year to support pro bono and legal aid organizations in Illinois alone.

The original FY17 budget proposal to increase LSC's funding to \$475 million is a solid investment in America's families and communities that saves taxpayer money

- Access to needed legal help can mean the difference between shelter and homelessness; medical assistance and unnecessary physical suffering; food on the table and hunger; economic stability and bankruptcy; or productive work and unemployment.
- LSC is a solid economic investment as well, saving money on other expensive government services and helping streamline the court system and cut down on court costs. A recent study found that legal aid in Illinois produces an almost 2:1 return on investment in economic benefits.