

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



The Nevada Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission

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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Nevada Legal Needs and Economic Impact Study

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DEMOGRAPHICS

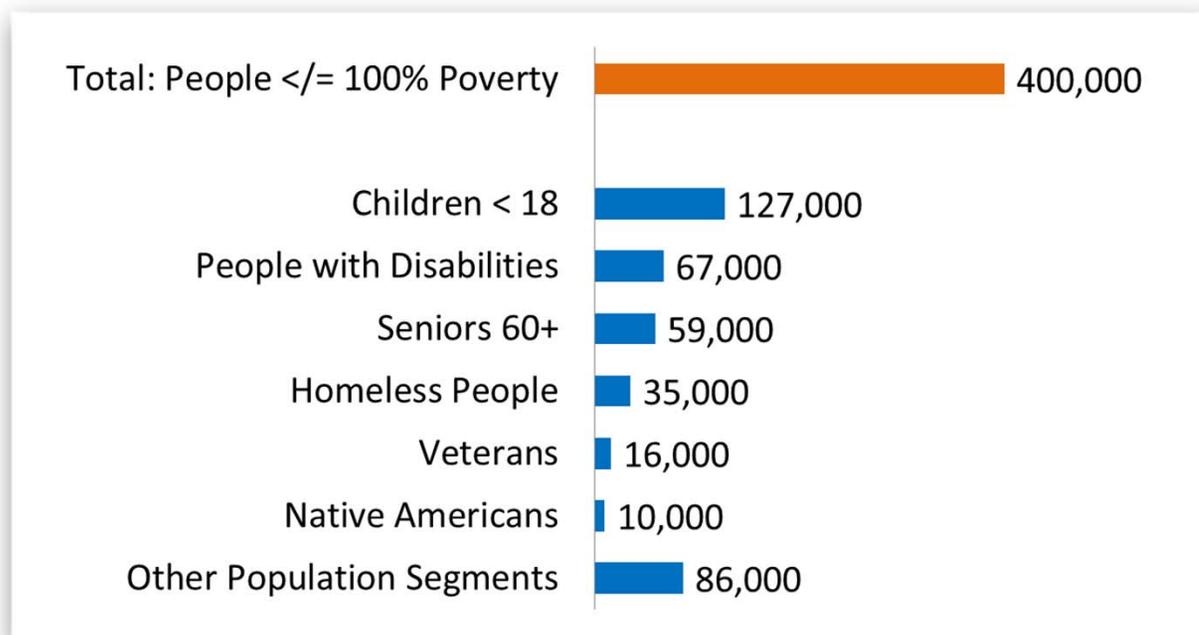
Whom Does Legal Aid Serve
in Nevada?



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*



*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

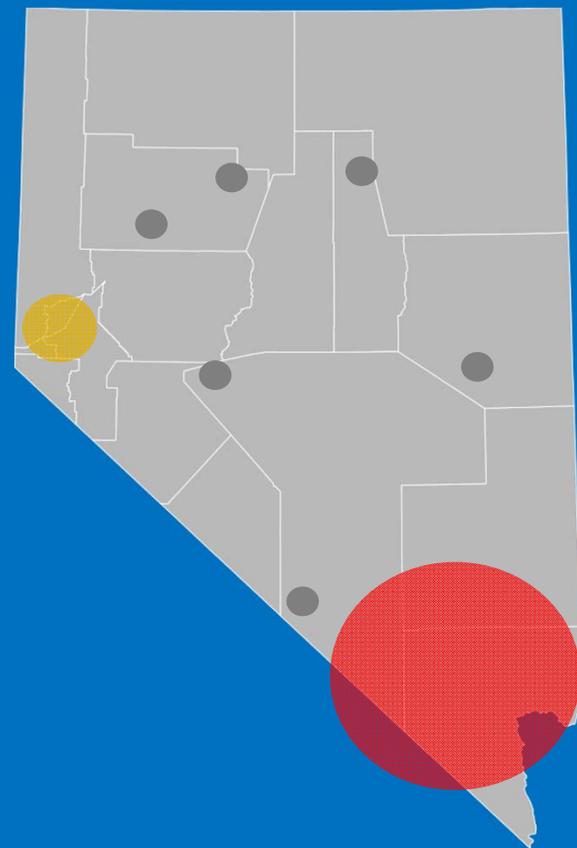
Reno / Sparks / Carson City

■ 60,000

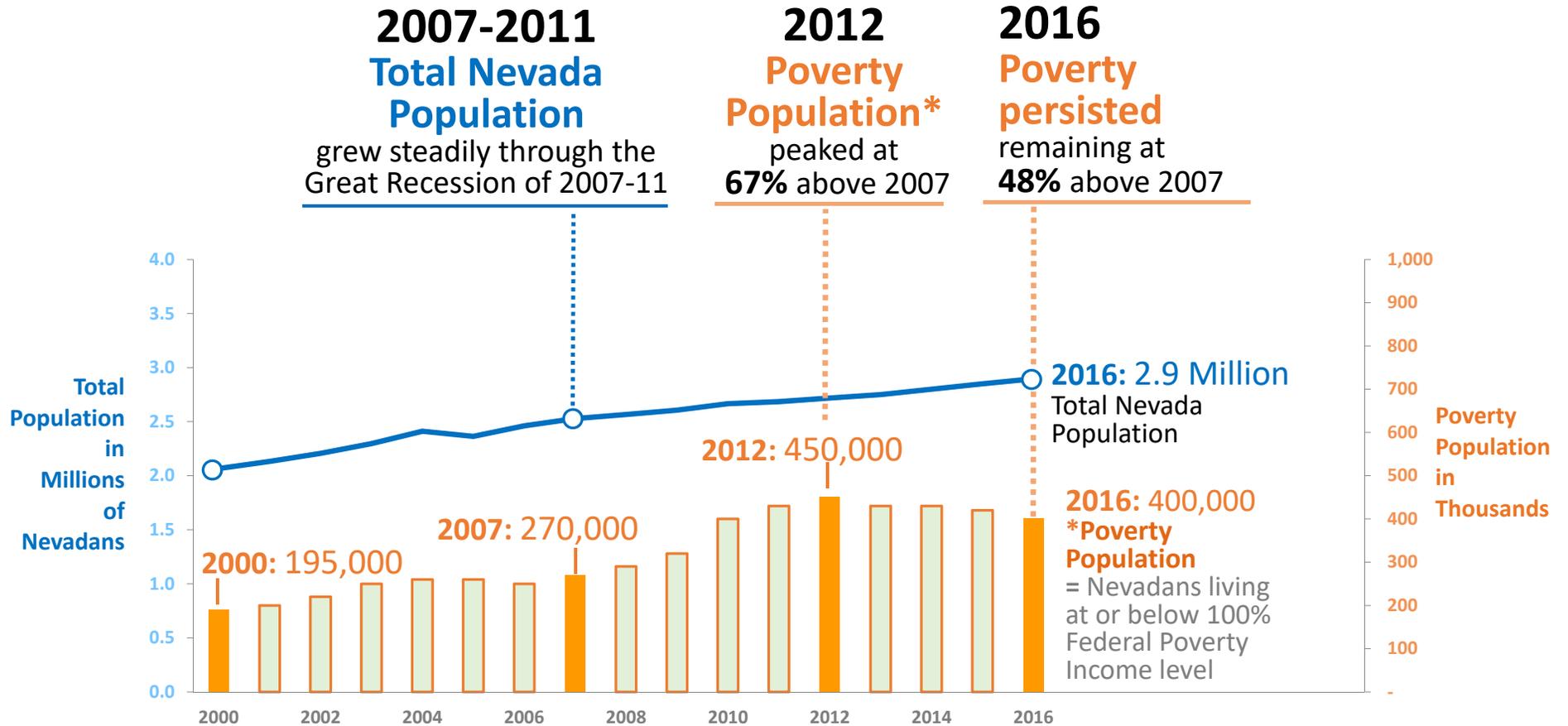
Las Vegas / North Las Vegas / Henderson

■ 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*



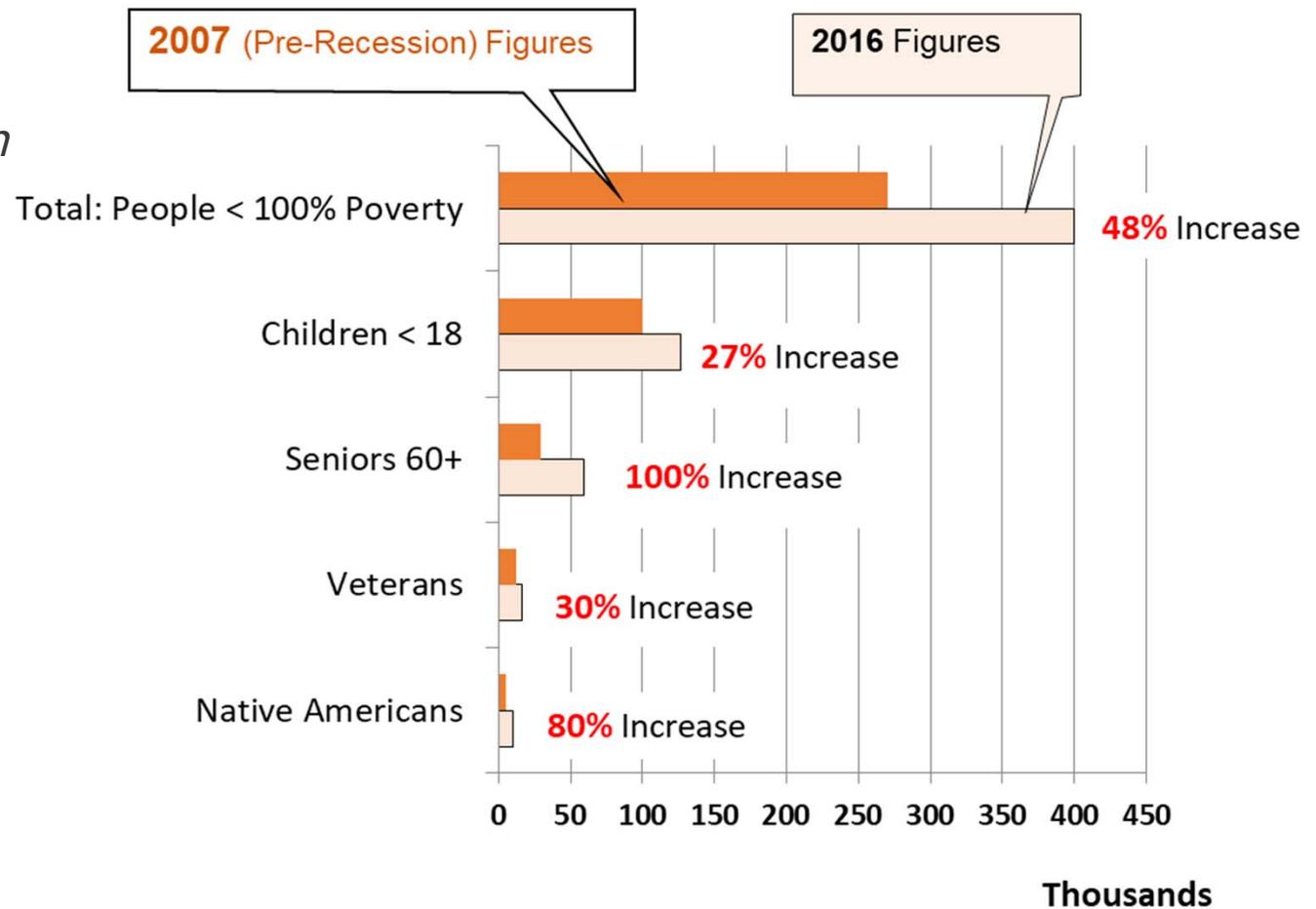
Some population segments grew by as much as **100%** between 2007 and 2016

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

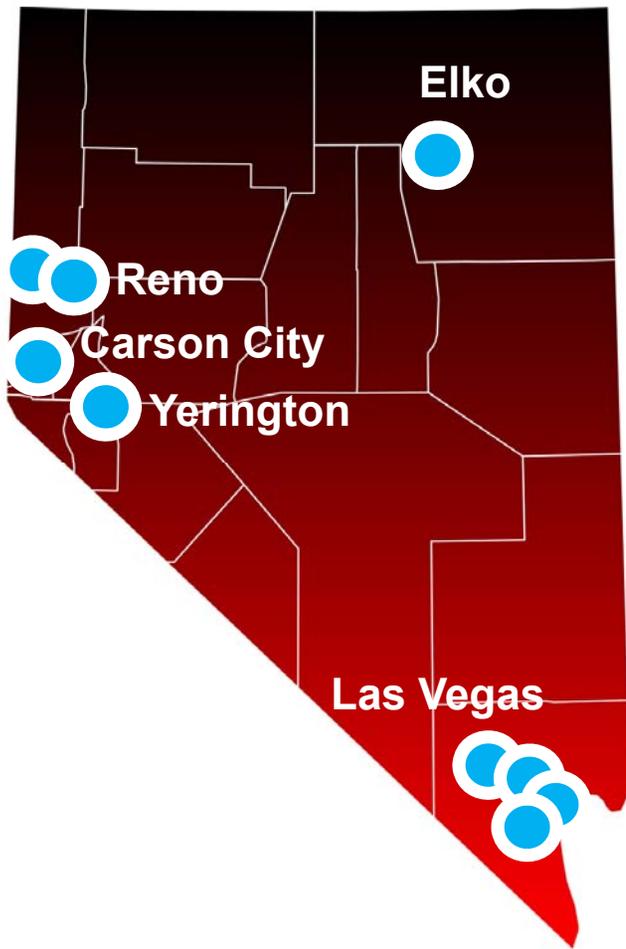
➤ PROVIDERS

- 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

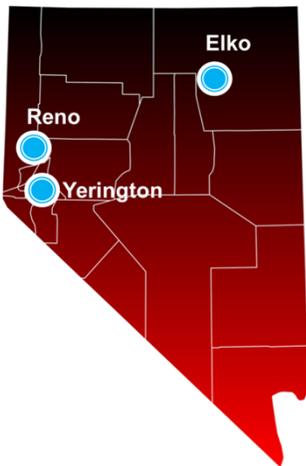
- Pro bono legal assistance for people with uncontested civil matters
- Domestic violence victim protection
- Immigration integration assistance to immigrant victims of domestic violence



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?



Eviction is one of the situations identified as legal problems by respondents in the survey.

- 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%**

Where Do the Problems Occur?

147,000 Legal Problems/Year Statewide

32,000

Reno / Sparks / Carson City Area

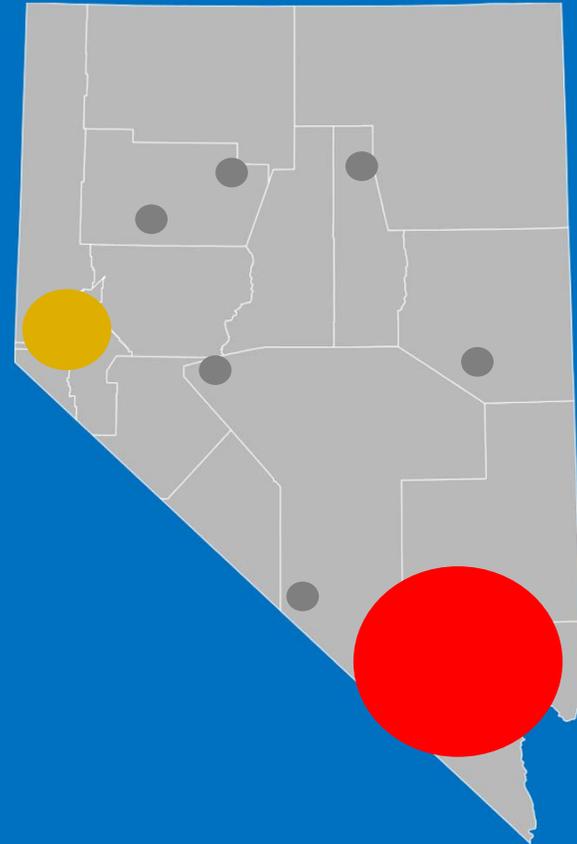
12,000

Small cities, towns, and rural Nevada counties

103,000

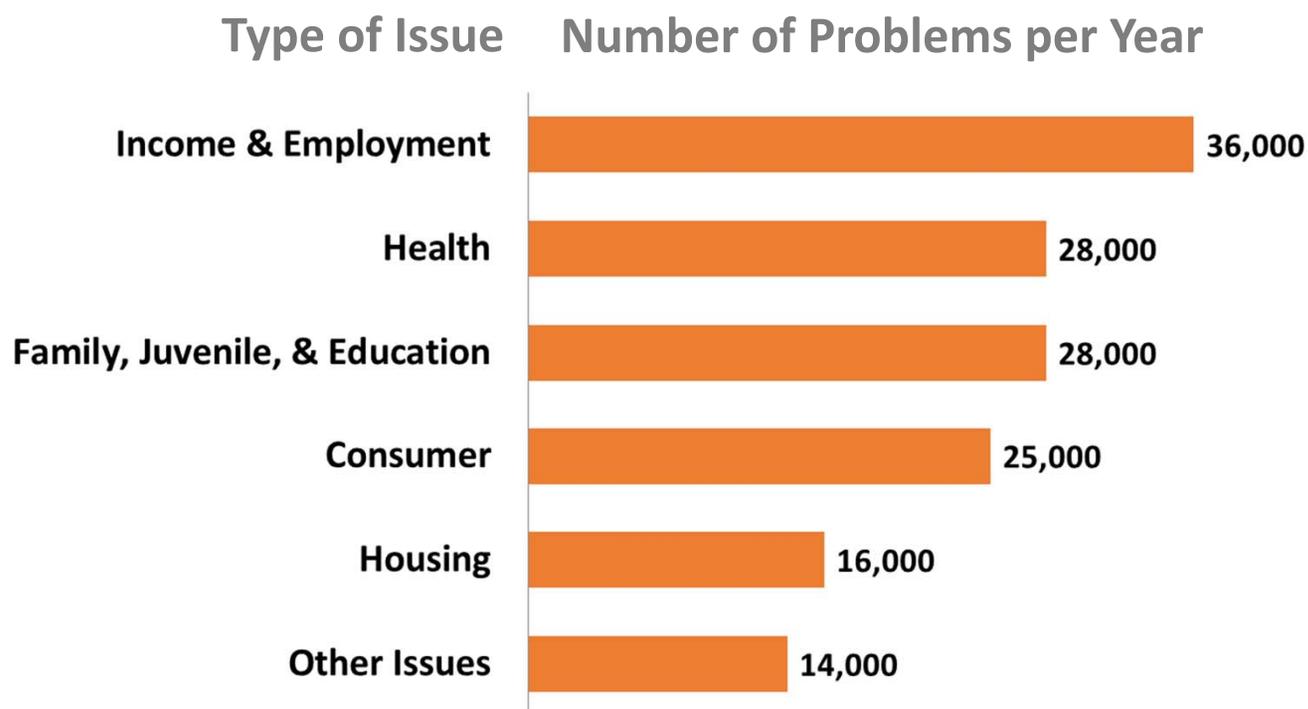
Las Vegas / North Las Vegas / Henderson

*Based on 2016 Census Figures
<125% of Poverty*



Legal Problems in Nevada by LEGAL ISSUE

147,000 Total Problems



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

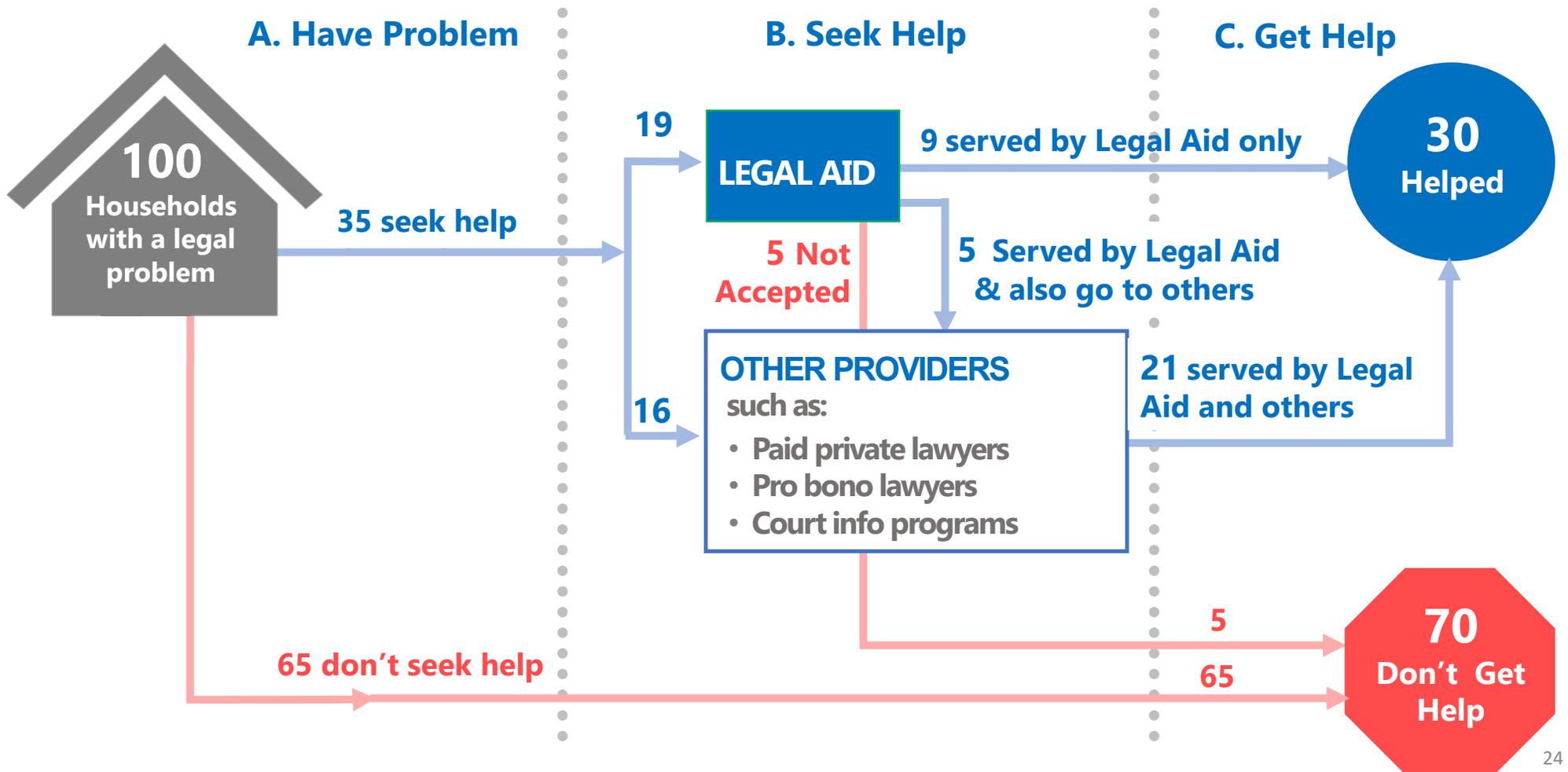
The Disparity Between Need and Capacity



- **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

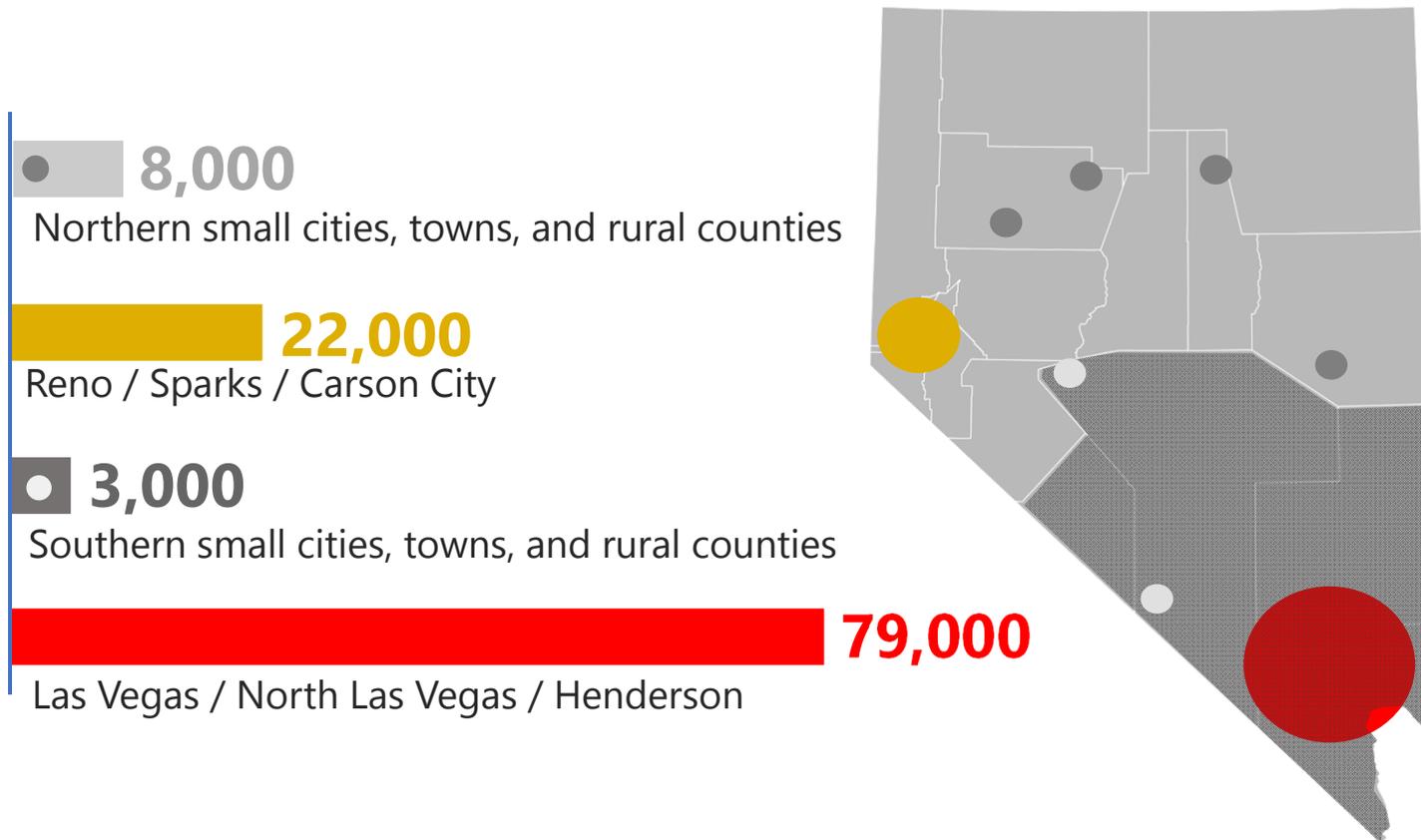
76% of the total legal needs go **unmet**

Survey Finding: *Where Nevadans Go When They Have a Legal Problem*



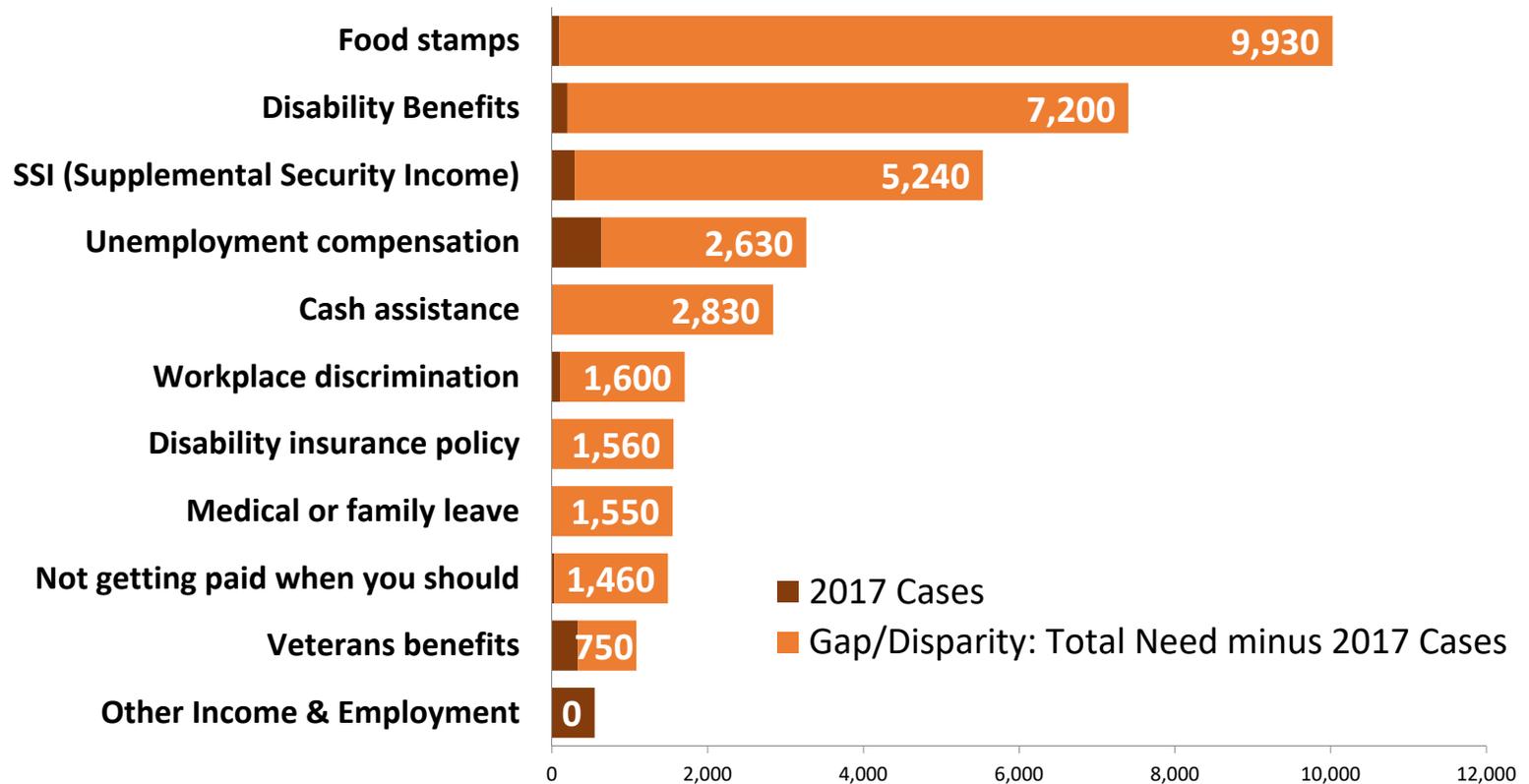
Justice Barrier in Nevada by REGION

112,000 Problems for Which People Do Not Get Help



Justice Barrier...

Income and Employment



Implications of Unmet Need For Legal Help With **Denial of Disability Benefits**

WITHOUT Legal Help, People...

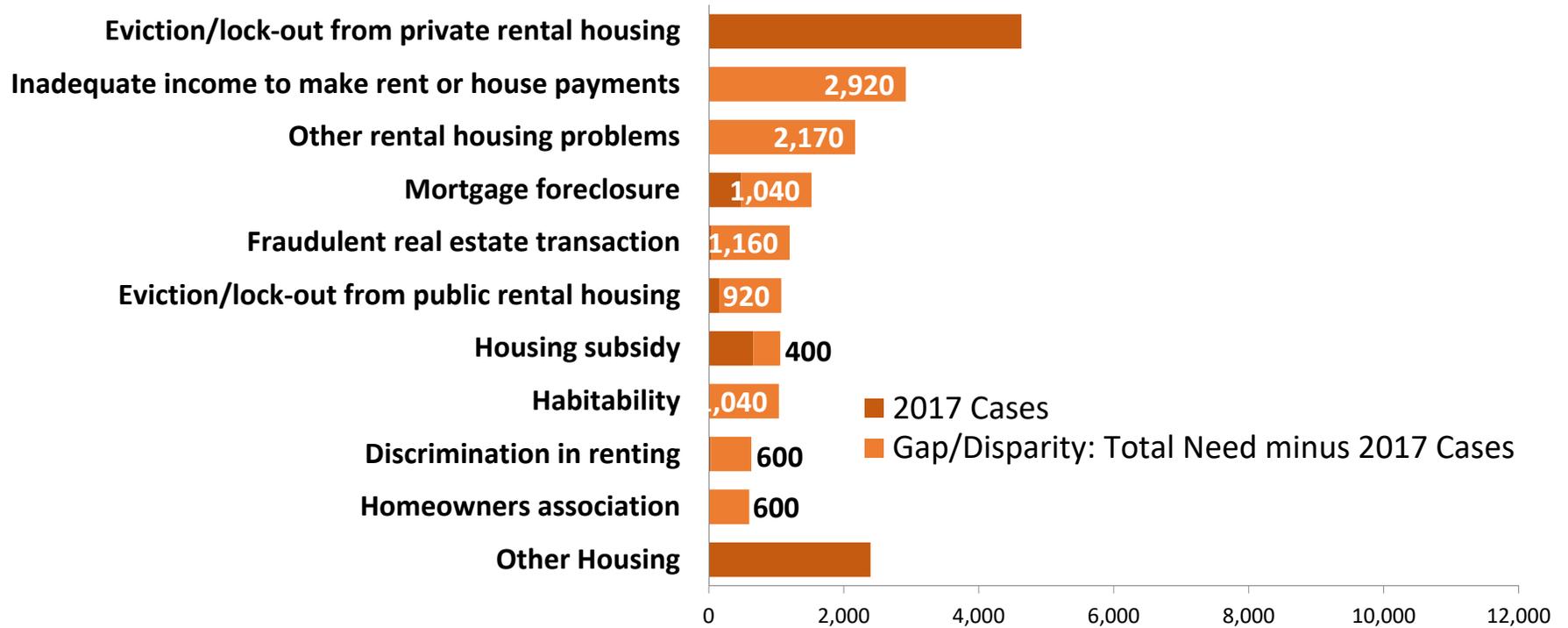
- ✓ Are unaware of legal rights
- ✓ Have difficulty navigating the complex appeal process
- ✓ Usually give up or lose
- ✓ Continue in poverty

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



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

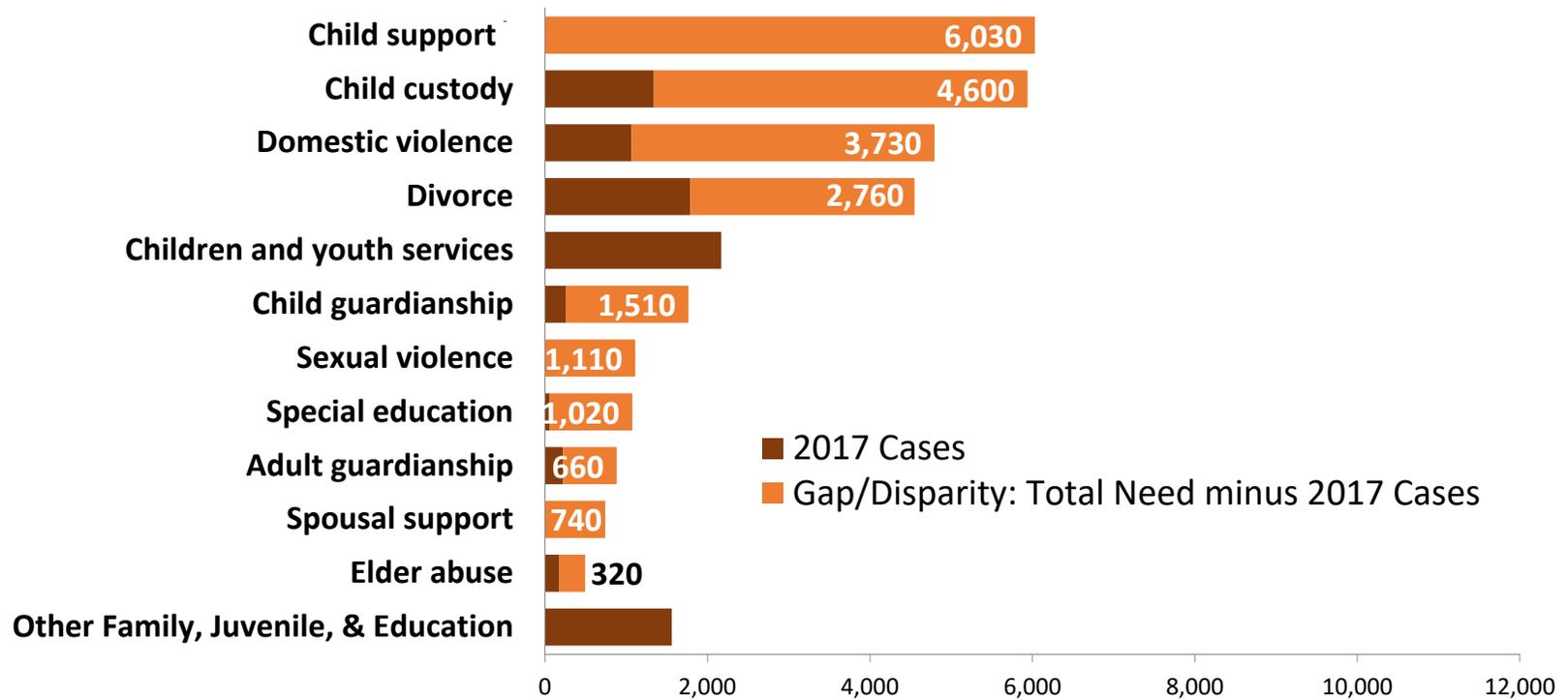
WITH Legal Help, People Can...

- ✓ 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



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

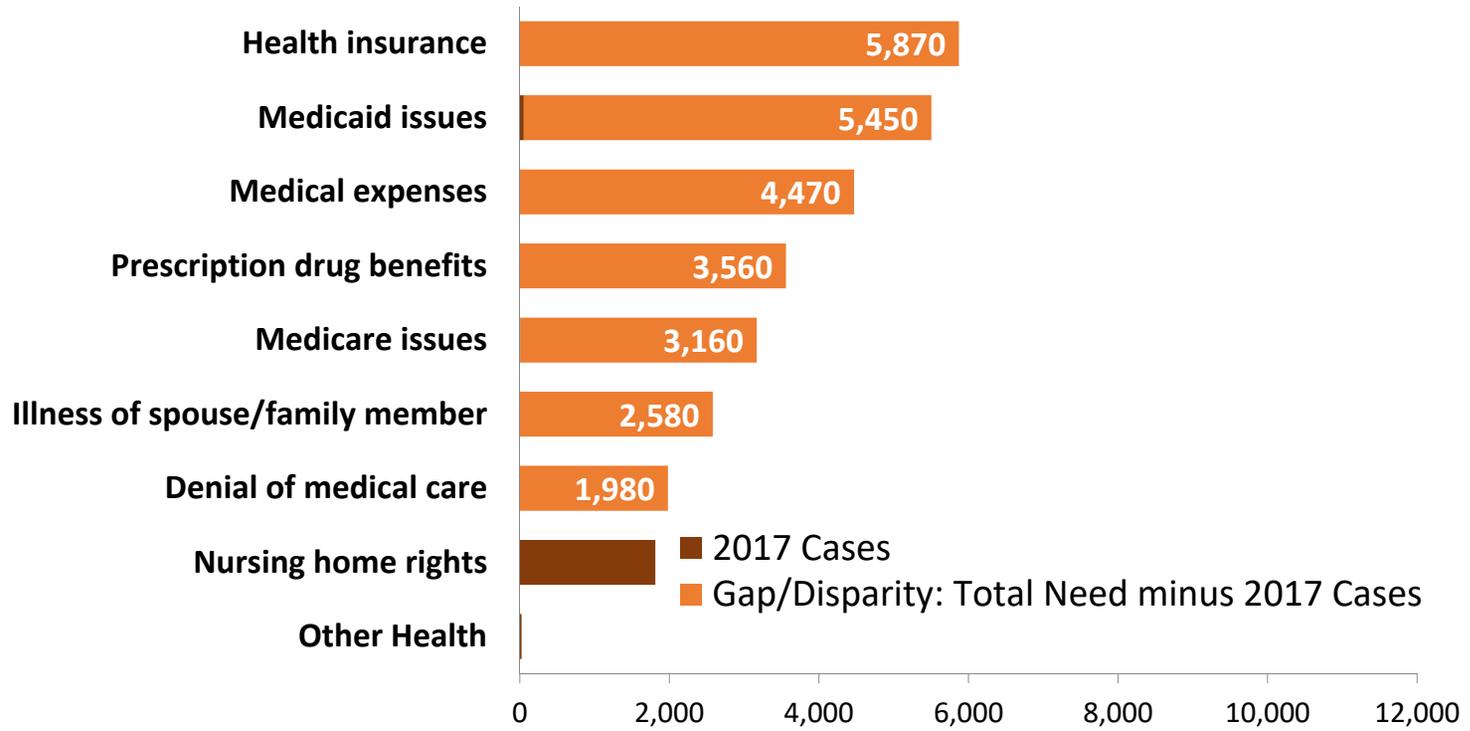
WITH Legal Help, People Can...

- 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

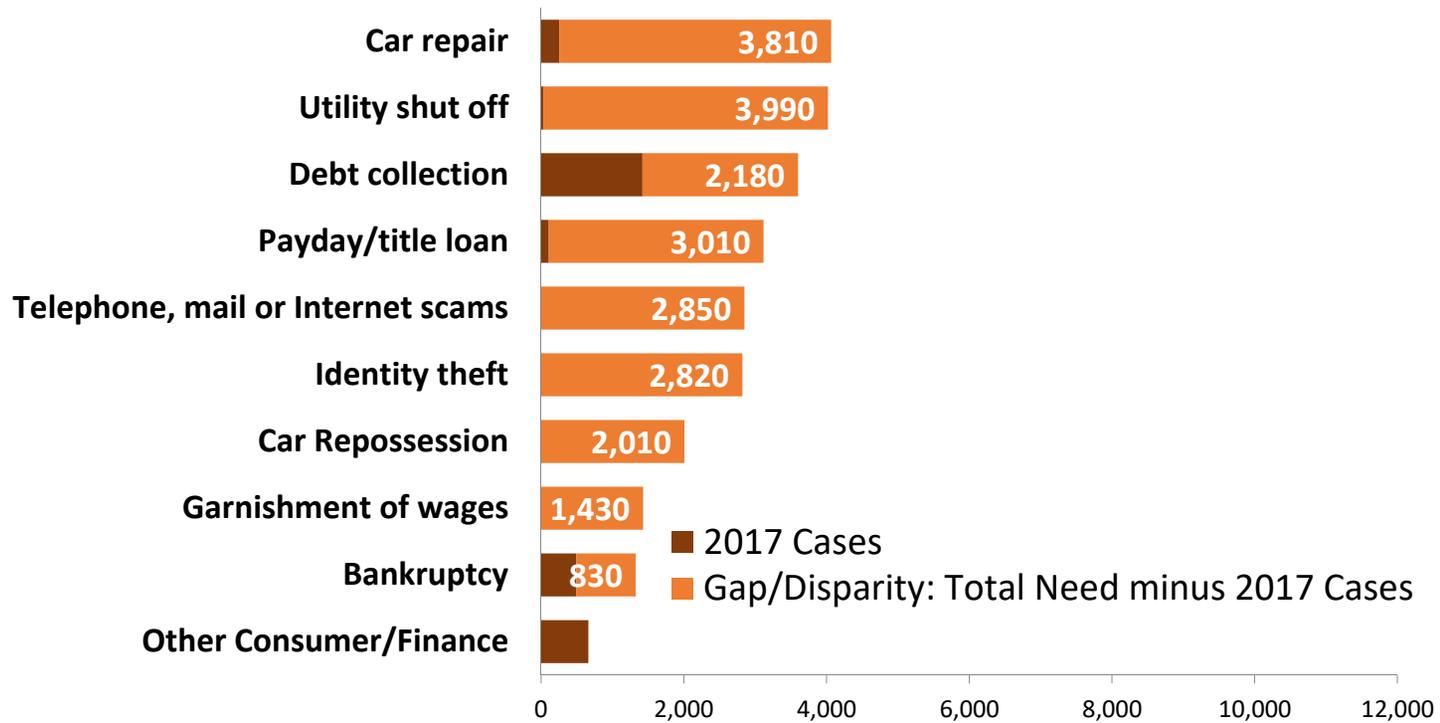


Justice Barrier...

Health

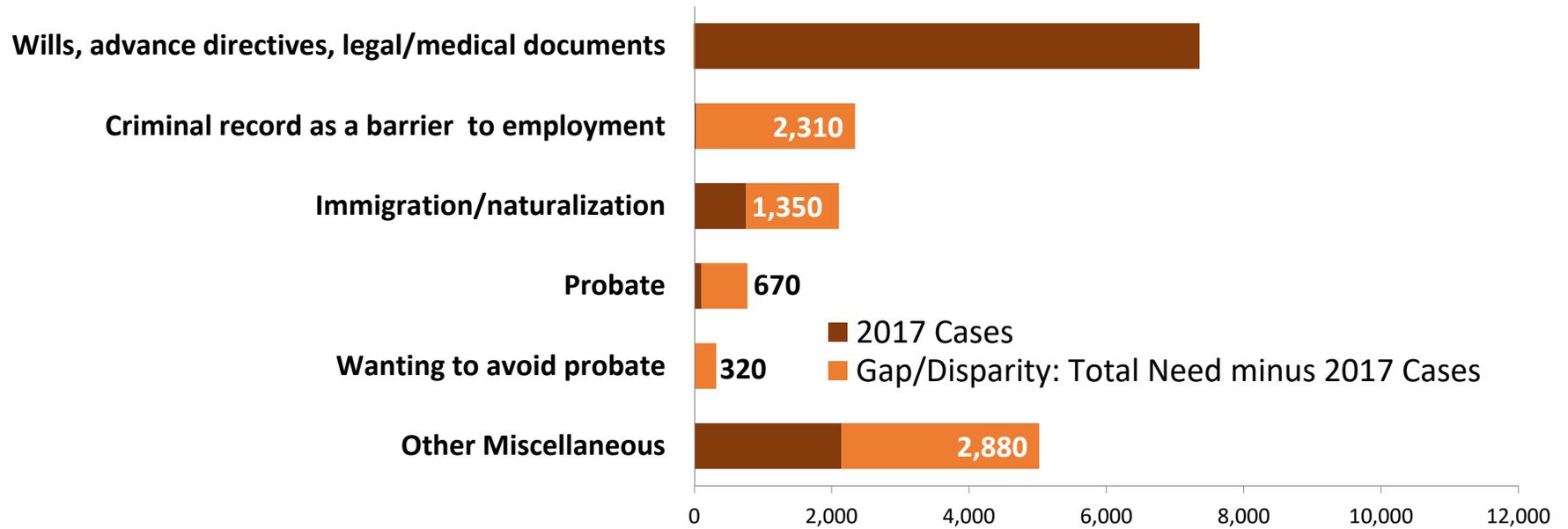


Justice Barrier... Consumer



Justice Barrier...

Other Issues



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

Legal Aid Funding

Program Funding
from All Sources

**\$18
Million**



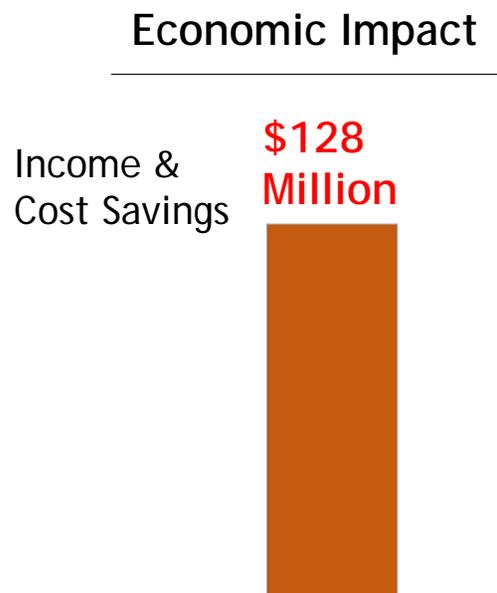
Economic Impact

Impacts &
Cost Savings

**\$128
Million**



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

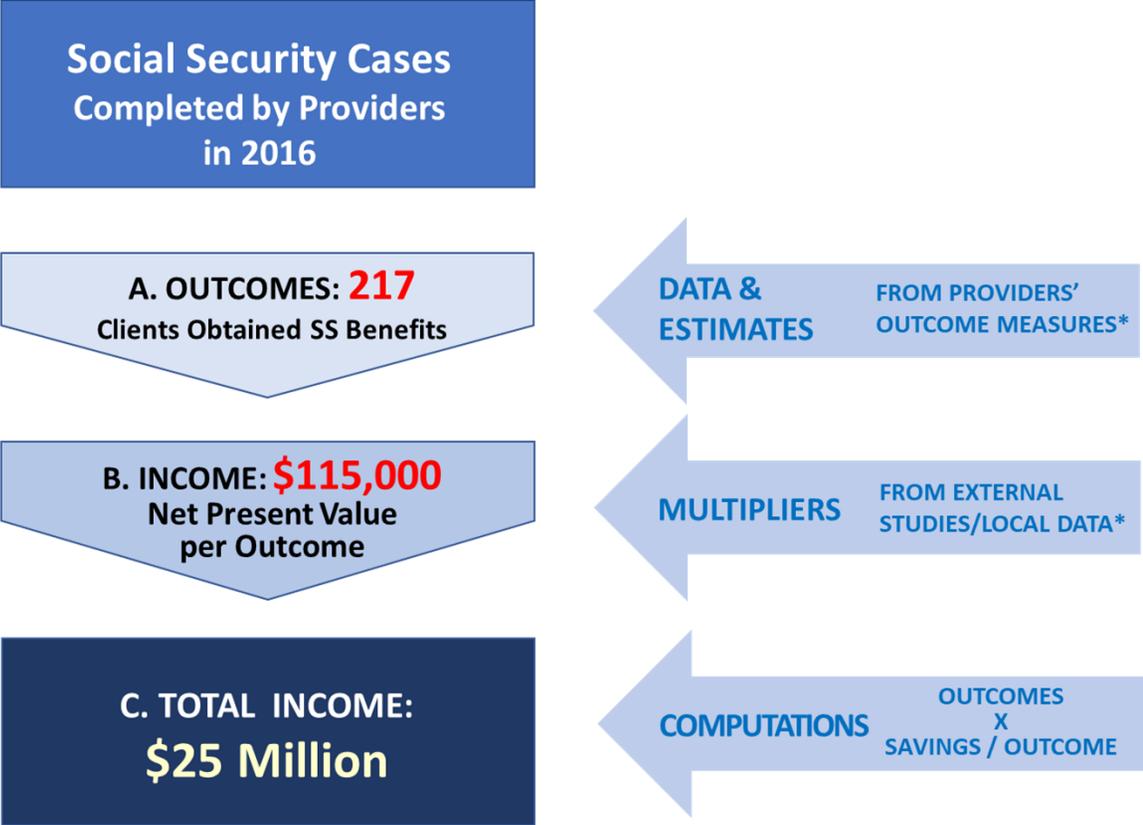
Legal Aid Secured **\$40M** for Clients, Comprised of

- 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*



* See final report and appendices for documentation of data sources and assumptions used in the analysis.

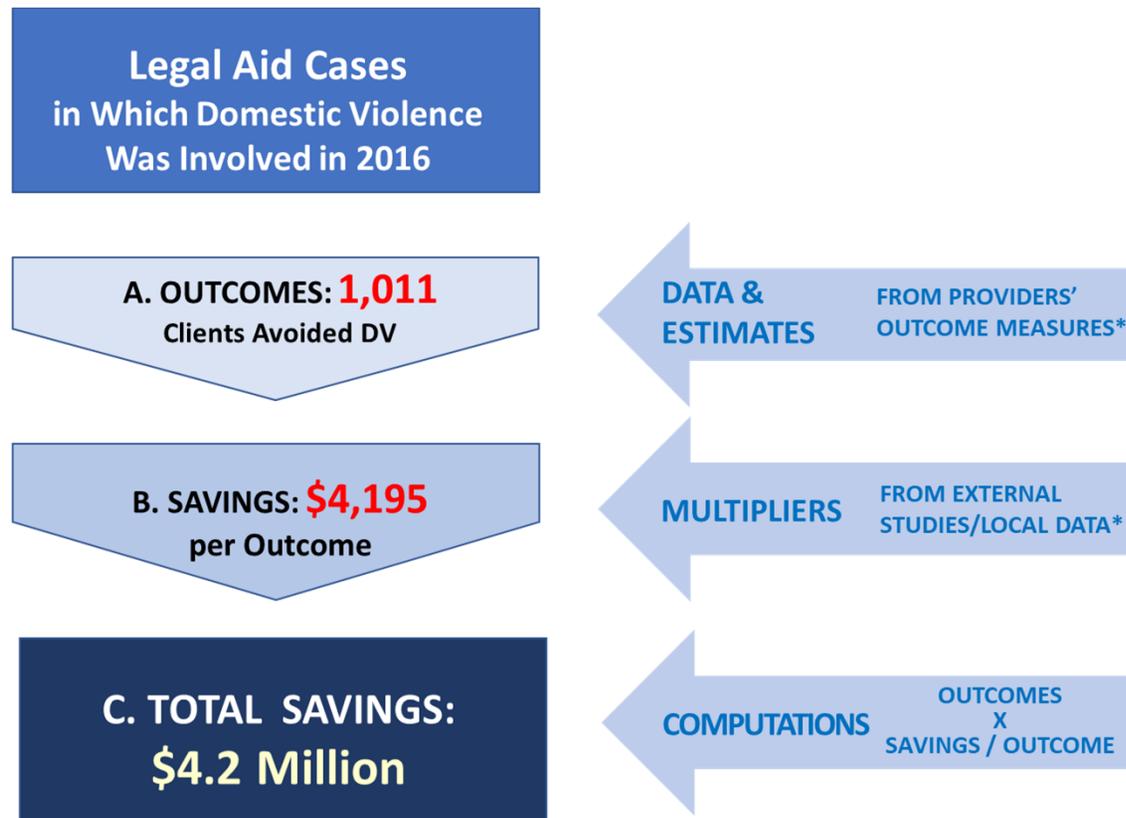
Cost Savings

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*



* 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**

* 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

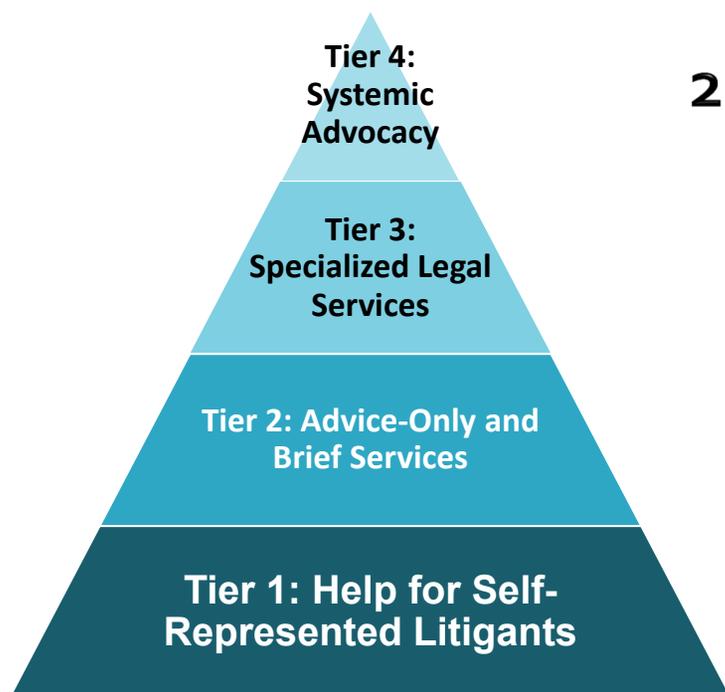


1. Reset Priorities

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**



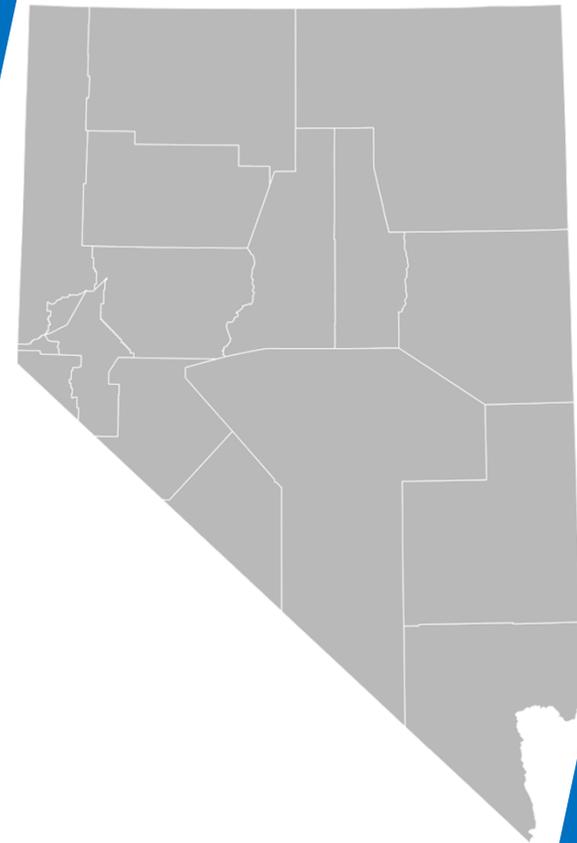
Opportunities for Expanding REACH and IMPACT

- **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:**

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

- **From LACSN:**

- **Children and Education:** A Collaborative Effort Addressing the “Justice Barrier” in Children and Education in Southern Nevada

- **From SNSLP:**

- **Seniors:** Planning for Incapacity for the Senior Population in Southern Nevada

- **From VARN:**

- **Rural Outreach:** Community Awareness of Legal Aid in Rural Nevada

- **From WLS:**

- **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**

