



CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES IN  
MINNESOTA

# SEEKING JUSTICE FOR ALL

House Judiciary Finance and  
Civil Law Committee  
January 14th, 2021

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# WHAT IS CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES?

Civil Legal Services (“CLS”) – or “legal aid” – is free legal help to people with low incomes who have civil (non-criminal) legal problems.

Civil Legal Services is more than the definition above. It is about dignity and basic human needs. It is about justice for all, not just those who can afford it.

Some examples of civil legal issues include:



## FAMILY

- Domestic Violence
- Divorce
- Custody
- Parenting Time
- Child Support
- Grandparent Rights



## HOUSING

- Eviction
- Foreclosure
- Repairs
- Utility Shut-off
- Discrimination
- Reasonable Accommodations



## ECONOMIC STABILITY

- Unemployment
- Health Care
- Education
- Employment
- Social Security
- Veterans Benefits

# THE NEED FOR CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES



Due to lack of resources, CLS is forced to turn away over half of the eligible people seeking service.

In Minnesota, there is one private attorney for every 432 potential paying clients, compared to one legal aid attorney for every 5,773 low-income individuals.



Private Attorney

432 potential paying clients



Legal Aid Attorney

5,773 low-income individuals





## SERVICES WE DELIVER



### REPRESENTATION

Attorney representation in court and administrative proceedings.



### ADVICE & LIMITED REPRESENTATION

Brief services to provide advice, consultation, negotiation, form assistance and referrals.



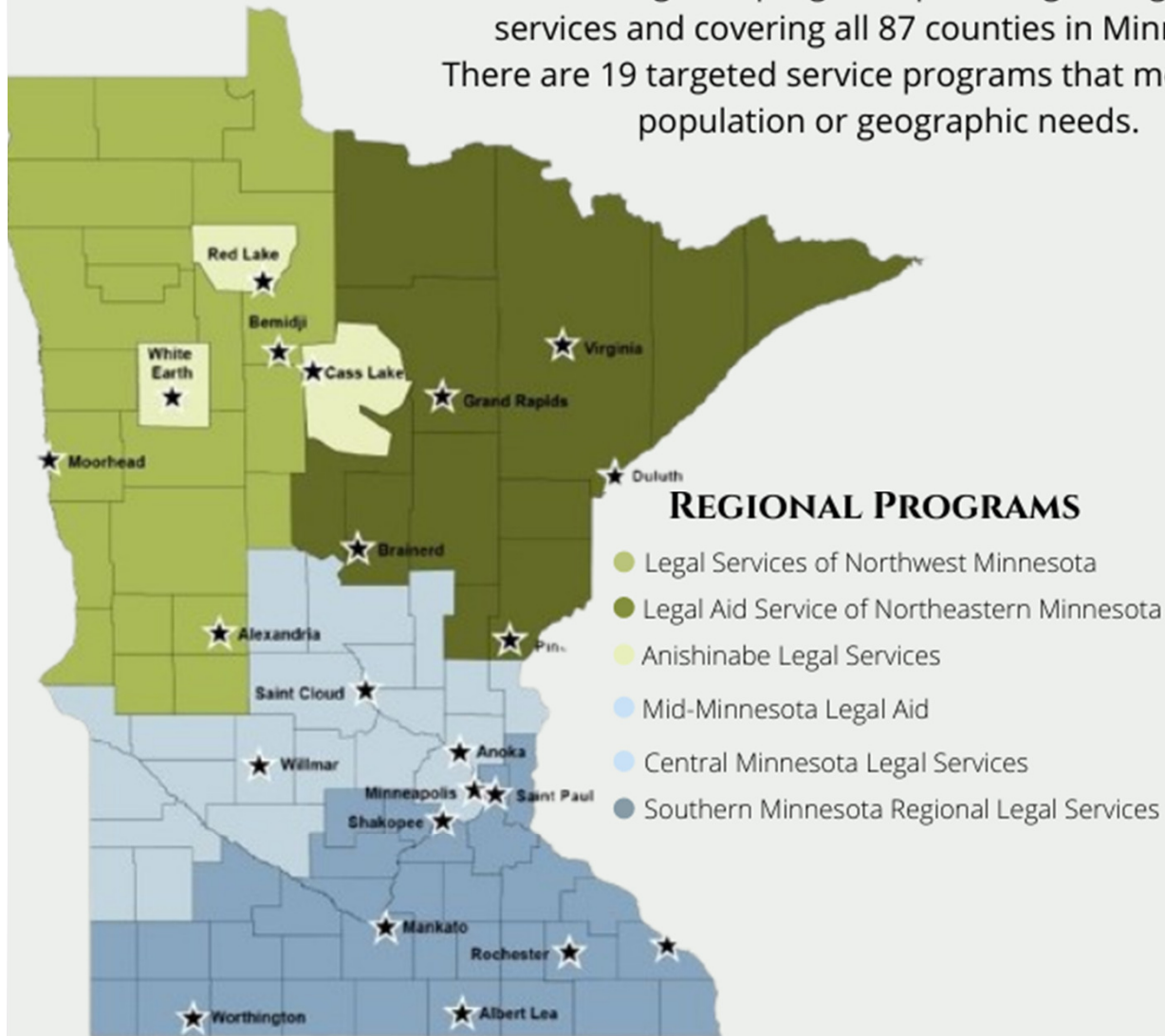
### EDUCATION & SELF HELP RESOURCES

Education programs for public and professionals.  
Web-based services, including LawHelpMN.org, ProJusticeMN.org, and Minnesota Legal Advice Online (mnlegaladvice.org).

# HOW WE PROVIDE SERVICE

There are six regional programs providing a range of civil legal services and covering all 87 counties in Minnesota.

There are 19 targeted service programs that meet specific population or geographic needs.



## TARGETED PROGRAMS

Cancer Legal Care  
Community Mediation Minnesota  
Farmers Legal Action Group  
Housing Justice Center  
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota  
Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Law Center  
Judicare of Anoka County  
Legal Assistance of Dakota County  
Legal Assistance of Olmsted County  
LegalCORPS  
Legal Services State Support  
Loan Repayment Assistance Program of Minnesota  
Minnesota AIDS Project  
Minnesota Disability Law Center  
Minnesota Justice Foundation  
Standpoint (formerly known as Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project)  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
Tubman  
Volunteer Lawyers Network

# THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

## WHO WE SERVE

\*At or below 125% of Federal Poverty Guidelines  
(\$32,188 annual income for a family of 4)

\*A civil legal issue  
(Focus on basic needs: safety, shelter, health, and  
sustenance)

\*Legal merit  
\*Availability of other resources

## DEMOGRAPHICS

CLS provides access to the justice system for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; people with disabilities; the elderly; the LGBTQ community; and veterans. These populations have disproportionate numbers of people with low incomes who qualify for CLS services.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values of CLS, central to our cause of equal justice for all.

2019

**44,920** cases closed

**112,433** Minnesotans  
served

In 2019, 60% of clients served by CLS were non-white (27% Black, 17% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 4% Native American, and 7% Other/Declined to Report).

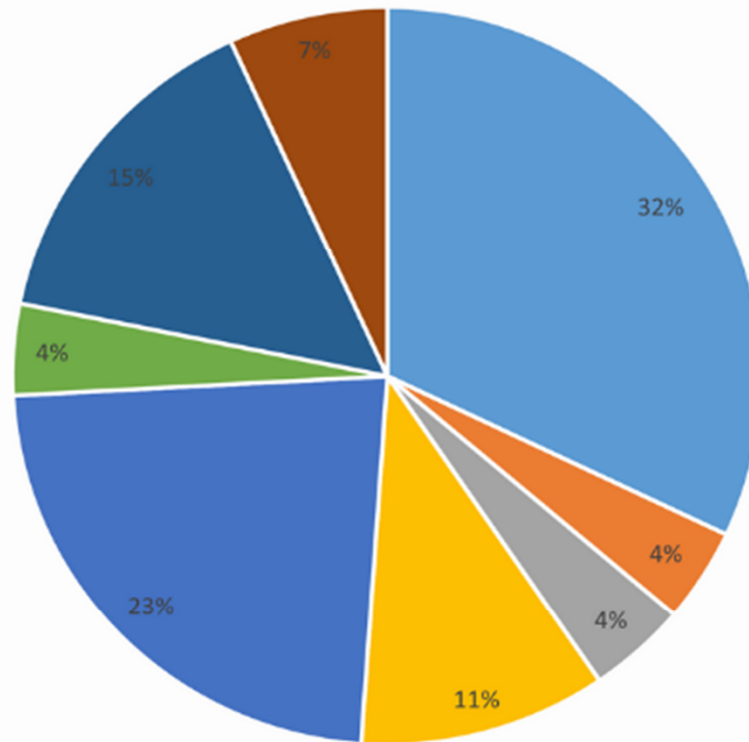
Equity and Inclusion efforts are sustainable because equity is a core value of CLS and central to our mission and our cause of equal justice for all.



# CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUNDING

Civil Legal Services FY20 Funding  
All Sources - \$45,953,375

FY20 Civil Legal Aid Funding



■ State Appropriation    ■ Attorney Reg Fee    ■ IOLTA    ■ Legal Services Corporation  
■ Other Government    ■ Private Donations    ■ Foundations / United Way    ■ Other



# CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES PANDEMIC RESPONSE



CLS quickly adjusted to the pandemic in the following ways:



CLS offices moved to a remote environment and continued to provide critical legal services to communities statewide.



CLS programs provided the technology and resources needed for staff to work remotely to safely provide services.



CLS programs implemented responsive programming such as new legal hotlines and virtual clinics.

Although CLS programs adapted quickly and continued providing services, it became evident that the pandemic caused disproportionate harm to the client communities we serve.





# CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES CARES ACT FUNDING

CLS received \$3,231,405 in CARES Act Funding.

## Technology

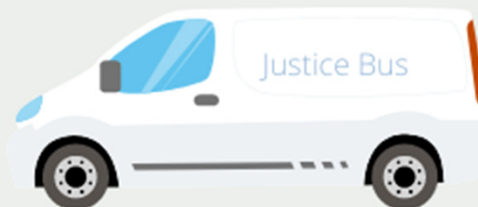
\$2,546,872



Includes technology, LawHelpMN upgrades, and PPE.

## Justice Bus (4)

\$382,800



Four mobile offices throughout Minnesota.

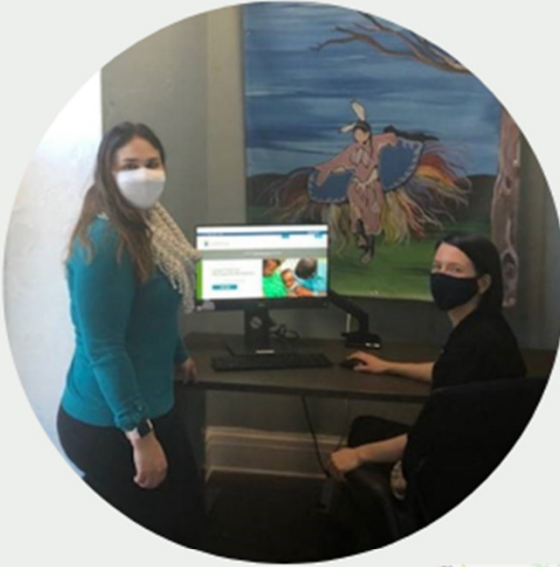
## Direct Service

\$301,733



Funding for direct client services.

# LEGAL KIOSKS

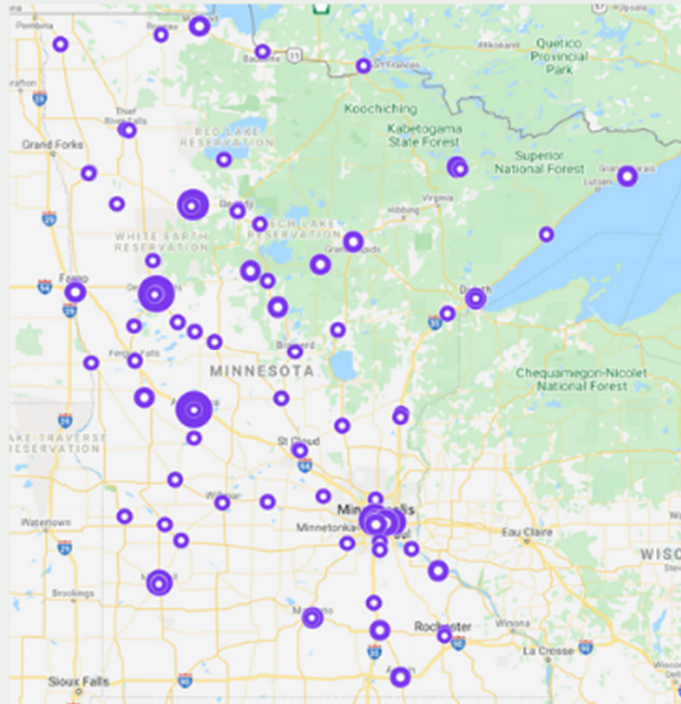


Duluth, MN

To address the digital divide, the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition requested CARES Act funds to give communities access to civil justice by creating a statewide network of legal kiosks to be stationed in a variety of court, agency, non-profit, and other community locations.

These community-based legal kiosks will help Minnesotans who face technology access and transportation barriers to have a healthy and safe experience interacting with civil legal aid experts, as well as the administrative and court systems in which their cases will be proceeding.

To date, there is at least one Legal Kiosk placed in 68 of the 87 counties in Minnesota.



Chaska, MN

# POST-PANDEMIC RESPONSE



CLS is preparing for an overwhelming amount of eviction filings and housing-related legal issues following the moratorium.

These plans include:

- a shifting of priorities
- temporary staffing
- homelessness prevention
- outreach



# CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES IMPACT







## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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