

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

APRIL 2017

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) provides equal access to justice to millions of Americans. With more than 800 offices nationwide, LSC provides access to justice for low-income individuals, children, families, seniors and veterans in every congressional district. For many of its clients, LSC is the only path to equal justice.

Approximately 94 percent of LSC's budget directly funds grantees who deliver legal aid. LSC promotes innovative partnerships and collaborations with other funders of civil legal aid, allowing providers to make the best use of limited dollars. Upon signing the law that created LSC, President Richard Nixon said, "Here each day the old, the unemployed, the underprivileged, and the largely forgotten people of our Nation may seek help. Perhaps it is an eviction, a marital conflict, repossession of a car, or misunderstanding over a welfare check—each problem may have a legal solution. These are small claims in the Nation's eye, but they loom large in the hearts and lives of poor Americans." The LSC's mission is to help those in need.

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) opposes President Trump's proposal to eliminate funding for LSC in his Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Blueprint. AALL urges Congress to support the full funding request of LSC because:

- **Access to justice is essential for a well-functioning democracy.** Merely having democratic institutions is not enough; people from all socioeconomic backgrounds must be able to access and use the courts and legal system. Otherwise, justice is only available to the few who can afford it. LSC provides access to justice in civil matters to low-income individuals who would otherwise be deprived of such services.
- **Civil Legal Aid is a smart investment of taxpayer dollars.** A growing body of research on the economic impact of providing civil legal services to the poor consistently demonstrates significant economic benefits for communities and government alike. These benefits accrue from clients' reduced reliance on other types of governmental aid and their enhanced ability to participate in the economic marketplace.
- **Current funding levels do not meet the growing demand for legal services.** While the size of the population eligible for LSC-funded services is at an all-time high, funding is near an all-time low, resulting in inefficiency in the courts and leaving the most vulnerable at risk.