

Attachment: Statewide Family Law Clinics

Goal

Provide one-on-one legal advice, form completion and hearing preparation services for low-income self-represented litigants in each of Vermont's 14 counties. In 70% of the 13,000 family law cases, parties struggle to represent themselves without counsel. Attorneys staffing the legal advice clinics will provide necessary advice and services to directly target needs of the parties in their particular family proceeding.

Project Activities

Design, establish and coordinate family law advice clinics statewide by using a combination of *pro bono* and low bono attorneys, student and paralegal volunteers, and staff attorneys from VLA and LSV and other legal services partners. Frequency of clinic operation would be customized depending on the location, volume of anticipated hearings, court calendar, and available attorney resources. Project staff would screen all litigants for low-income eligibility and conduct follow-up activities with litigants served. Each litigant will have up to one hour with an attorney to ask questions, fill out forms and to receive advice on court process, how to organize and present their case, what witnesses to call, and whether a settlement offer is fair.

Project Budget

The partnership is seeking an annual appropriation of \$250,000 to hire a staff attorney and to cover payments to private and contracted attorneys to appear at family law advice clinics.

1 FTE staff attorney to set up clinics, find clinic staffers, screen litigants and coordinate program; salary/benefits/OH	\$100,000
Payments to Private and/or Partnership Staff Attorneys @ \$750 per clinic	\$126,000
Mileage/transportation costs for attorneys and staff, advertising, website integration, payment coordination, etc.	\$ 24,000
Total Budget	\$ 250,000

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