



**VERMONT
LEGAL
AID**

Federal Funding Challenges and Community Impact

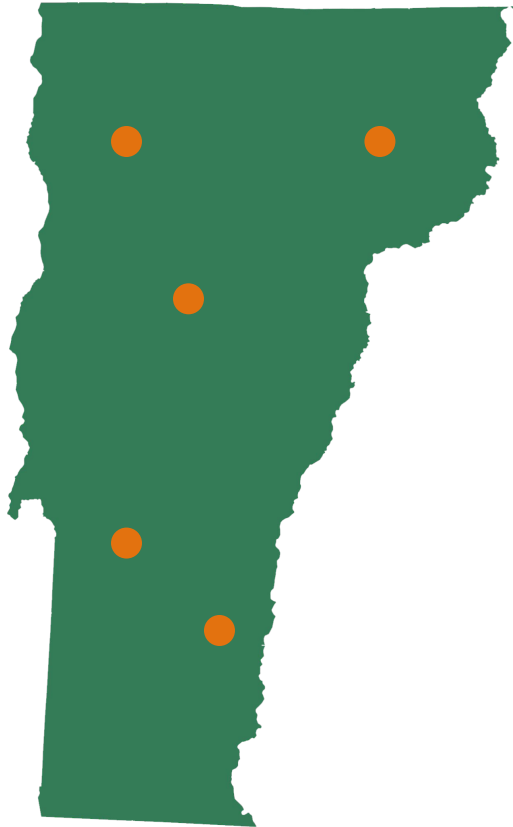
Yasmin Dwedar

May 2, 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

We strive to

- advance fairness and justice in the civil legal system
- address the social and economic interests of our clients, and
- confront the underlying causes of poverty, discrimination and inequality.



Statewide services from five offices

Burlington

Montpelier

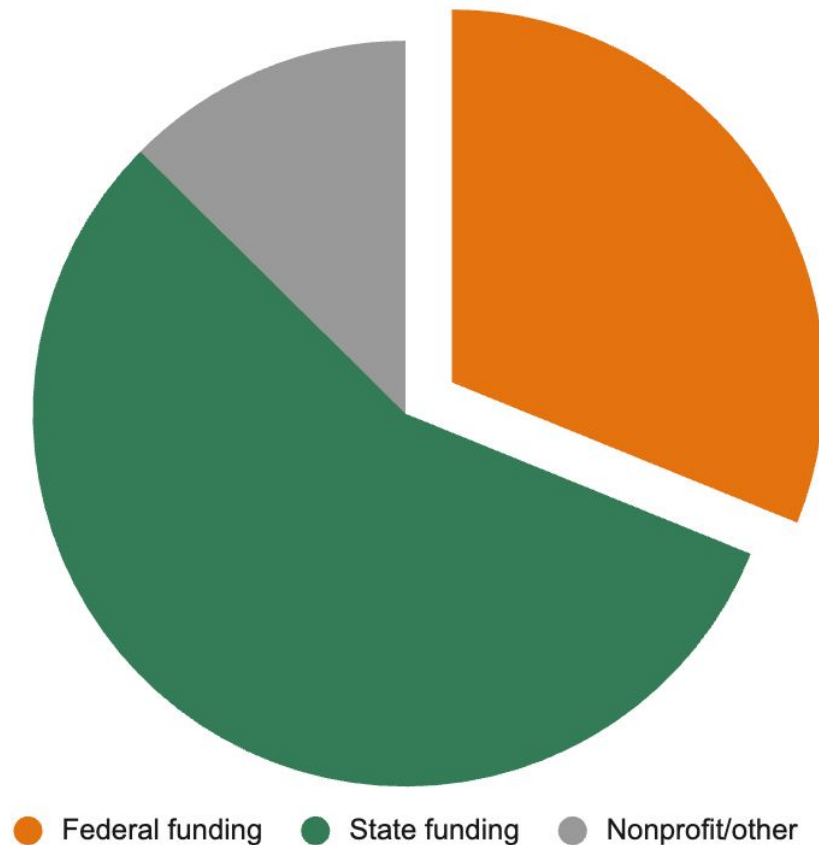
Rutland

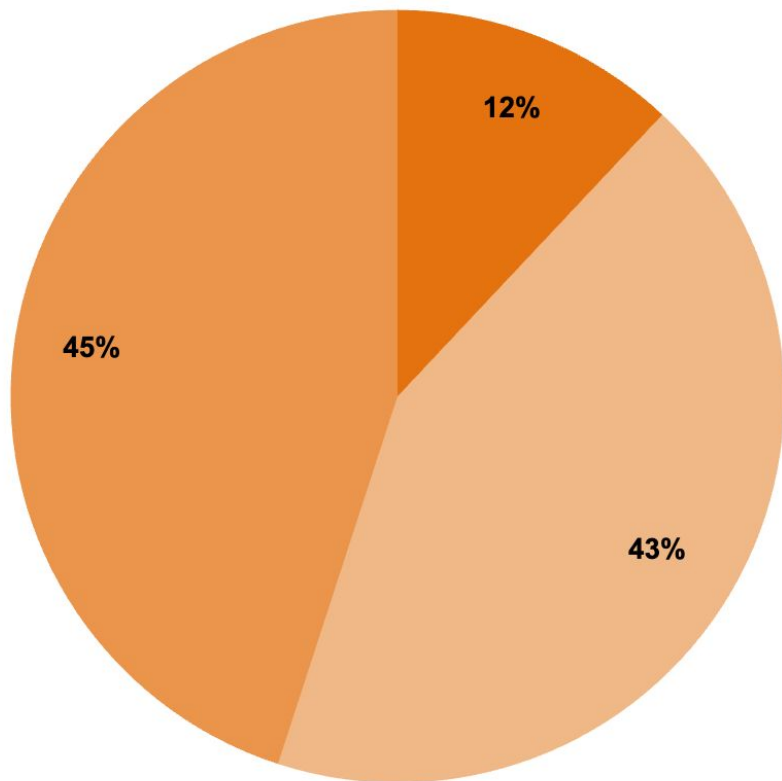
Springfield

St. Johnsbury

Current Funding Landscape

- **Total annual budget: ~\$12.1 million**
- Federal funding: 31.2% (\$3.78 million)
- State funding: 56.3% (\$6.83 million)
- Nonprofit/other: 12.6% (\$1.53 million)





Federal Funding Breakdown

\$3.78 million total

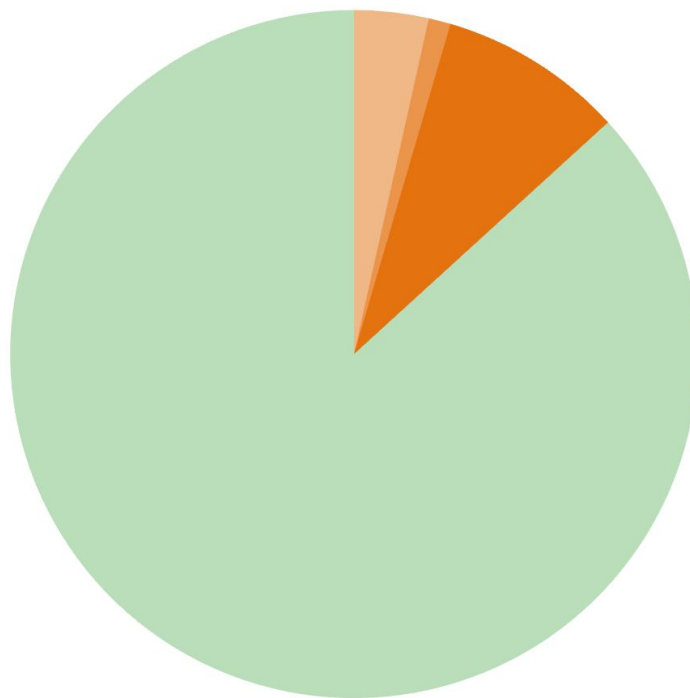
- Direct federal grants: 12%
- State pass-through federal grants: 43%
- Nonprofit pass-through federal grants: 45%

● Direct federal grants: ● State pass-through federal grants:
● Nonprofit pass-through federal grants:

Pandemic Funding Ending

- Homeownership Assistance (HLAP): \$436K/yr, ended December 2024
- Public Health Workforce: \$129K/yr, ended December 2024
- Housing for Everyone Law Project (HELP): \$1.09 million/yr, ending June 2025

Total yearly pandemic funding loss: \$1.65 million



● Homeownership Assistance (HLAP) ● Public Health Workforce
● Housing for Everyone Law Project (HELP) ● Projected FY25 Funding

Federal Grants at Immediate Risk



Housing Discrimination Law Project (HDLP): \$408K

- HUD grant expired December 2024
- 2.25 FTE staff handling discrimination cases

Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC): \$68K

- IRS program with 25% staff reductions

Client Assistance Program (CAP): \$132K

- Department of Education program facing cuts

Pass-Through Federal Funding Threatened



Vermont Ombudsman Project (VOP):

- Potential loss of \$700K+ (60% of funding)
- Would eliminate 5 of 8 full-time positions
- Cannot fulfill mandate to visit long-term care facilities

Disability Law Project (DLP)

- Protection and Advocacy funds (PADD): \$415K
- Would end work for children with disabilities

Elder Law Project

- Older Americans Act (OAA): \$249K
- Impact on services for Vermonters over 60

The Housing Crisis:

By the Numbers



From our 2024 Legal Needs Assessment:

45%

Increase in
evictions over five
years

43%

Housing calls
increased since
2019

25%

No-cause evictions
surged housing cases
from 10%

The Human Impact:

Client Stories



Cost to Vermonters without Legal Aid



When legal aid is unavailable:

Increased homelessness and emergency housing costs

Higher public assistance costs

Increased risk of crime and family instability

Poorest Vermonters forced to navigate justice system on their own

Increased burden on our court system already grappling with docket backlogs

Our Response:

Internal Measures



Cost-saving measures:

- Not filling vacant positions
- Operational efficiencies
- Consolidating office space
- Internal staff reassignments

Despite these efforts:

- Average cost per position: \$180,000
- Potential staff reductions in FY26
- Areas at risk: Housing, disability, elder law, victim rights, taxpayer advocacy, long-term care advocacy

Funding Request:

\$1.6 Million

- **\$500,000** - Maintain Housing Projects (HLAP and HELP)
- **\$180,000** - Staff Attorney for Mental Health Legal Project
- **\$180,000** - Staff Attorney for Victims' Rights Project
- **\$540,000** - Restore Poverty Law Project staffing
- **\$200,000** - Eviction Protection Support for Legal Services Vermont

Return on Investment



Vermont Benefits from an

\$11 Return for
Every \$1 in Funding for Legal Services

Prevention of
emergency
housing expenses

Reduced
healthcare
costs

Fewer court
resources
required

Long-term
family stability

The Justice Gap:

Current Reality

2024 Legal Needs Assessment Findings:

- Housing problems have reached crisis levels
- Legal needs increased substantially in 5 years
- Call volume up 14% from 2022 to 2023 alone
- Family law remains a high unmet legal need
- Healthcare navigation is increasingly complex

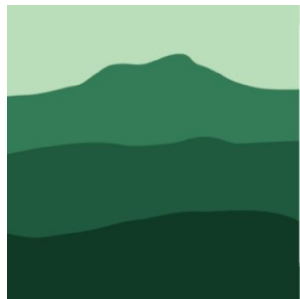
LEGAL SERVICES VERMONT
AND
VERMONT LEGAL AID

STATEWIDE LEGAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

DECEMBER 4, 2024



Funded in part by a grant from the Legal Services Corporation

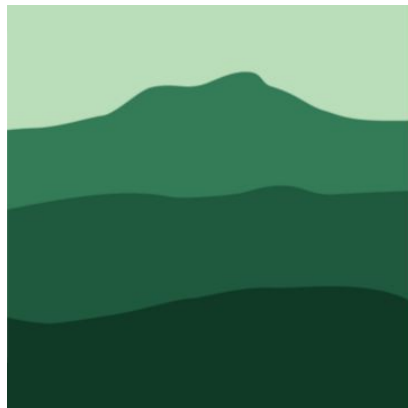


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Our Request: Bridge the Justice Gap

\$1.6 Million Investment to:

- Maintain critical housing stability services
- Protect vulnerable Vermonters
- Prevent greater downstream costs
- Ensure access to justice for all Vermonters



VERMONT LEGAL AID

Yasmin Dwedar

Executive Director