

Legal Services for Vermont's Small Businesses

Presentation to Vermont General
Assembly, House Committee on
Commerce and Economic
Development

January 31, 2025

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Vermont Small Business
Law Center

VERMONT LAW & GRADUATE SCHOOL



Who are we, what do we do?

We provide access to legal services for small business:

- Individual educational consults
- Paid attorney referrals for qualifying businesses (10 hours paid, we find the attorney)
- Public educational events





Who are our partners?

- Vermont Small Business Development Center
 - U.S. Small Business Administration
- Vermont Bar Association, and law firms
- Community and business development partners:
 - Capstone Agencies
 - Vermont Professionals of Color Network
 - Center for Women & Enterprise
 - Vermont Arts Council
 - Center on Rural Innovation
 - Micro Business Development Program
 - Regional Development Corporations
- Incubator and accelerator programs across the state:
 - The Cultivator (Randolph)
 - Black River Innovation Campus Actuator (Springfield)
 - Space on Main (Bradford)
 - DeltaCline VT
 - Vermont Forestry Accelerator
 - Generator Makerspace (Burlington)
 - Hub Co-Works (Rutland)



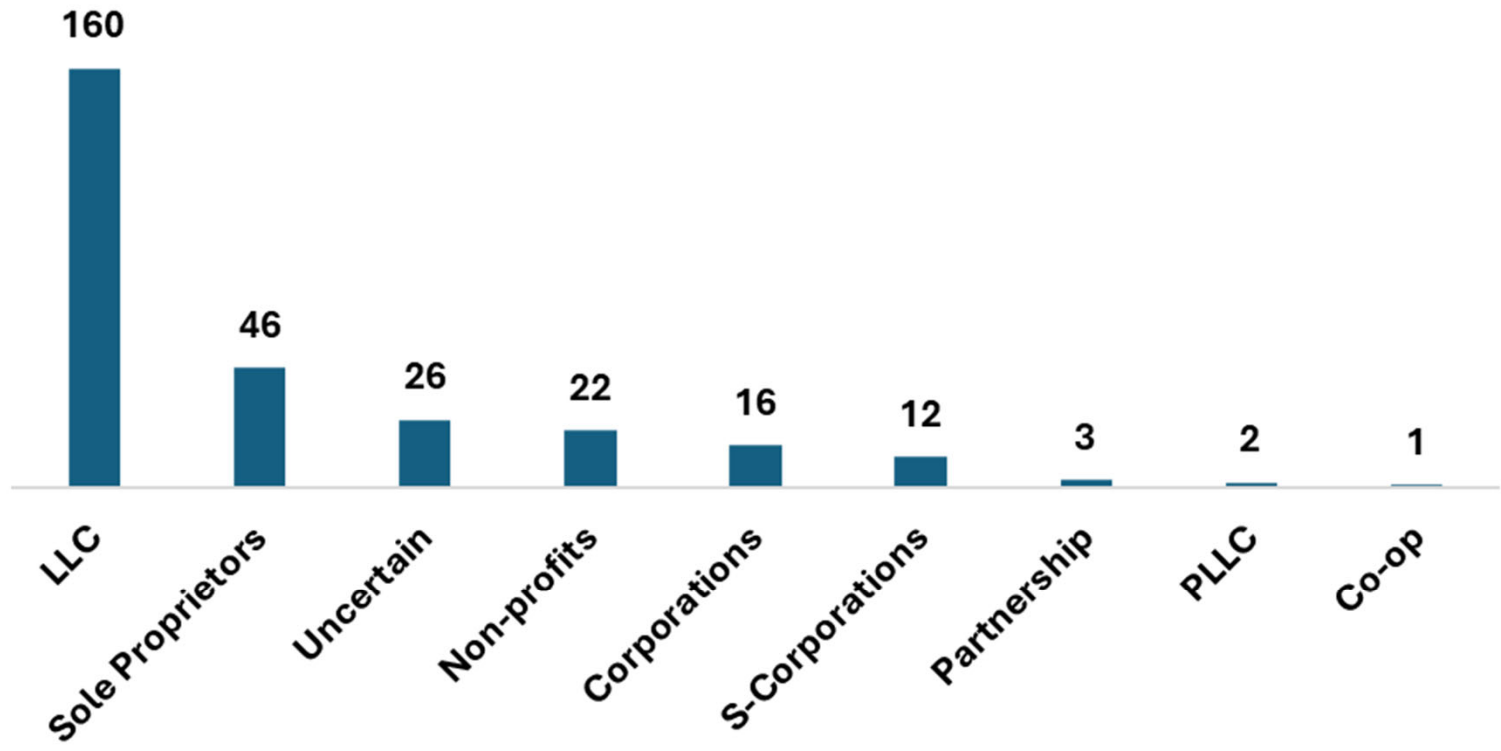
Numbers Served (2024)

- 288 – intakes from businesses requesting legal education
- 149 – educational consultations with small businesses
- 168 – businesses placed or in process of being placed with attorney
- 39 – businesses signed up for an educational consult through April 15, 2025
- 80+ – educational presentations to groups of business owners, and flood clinics



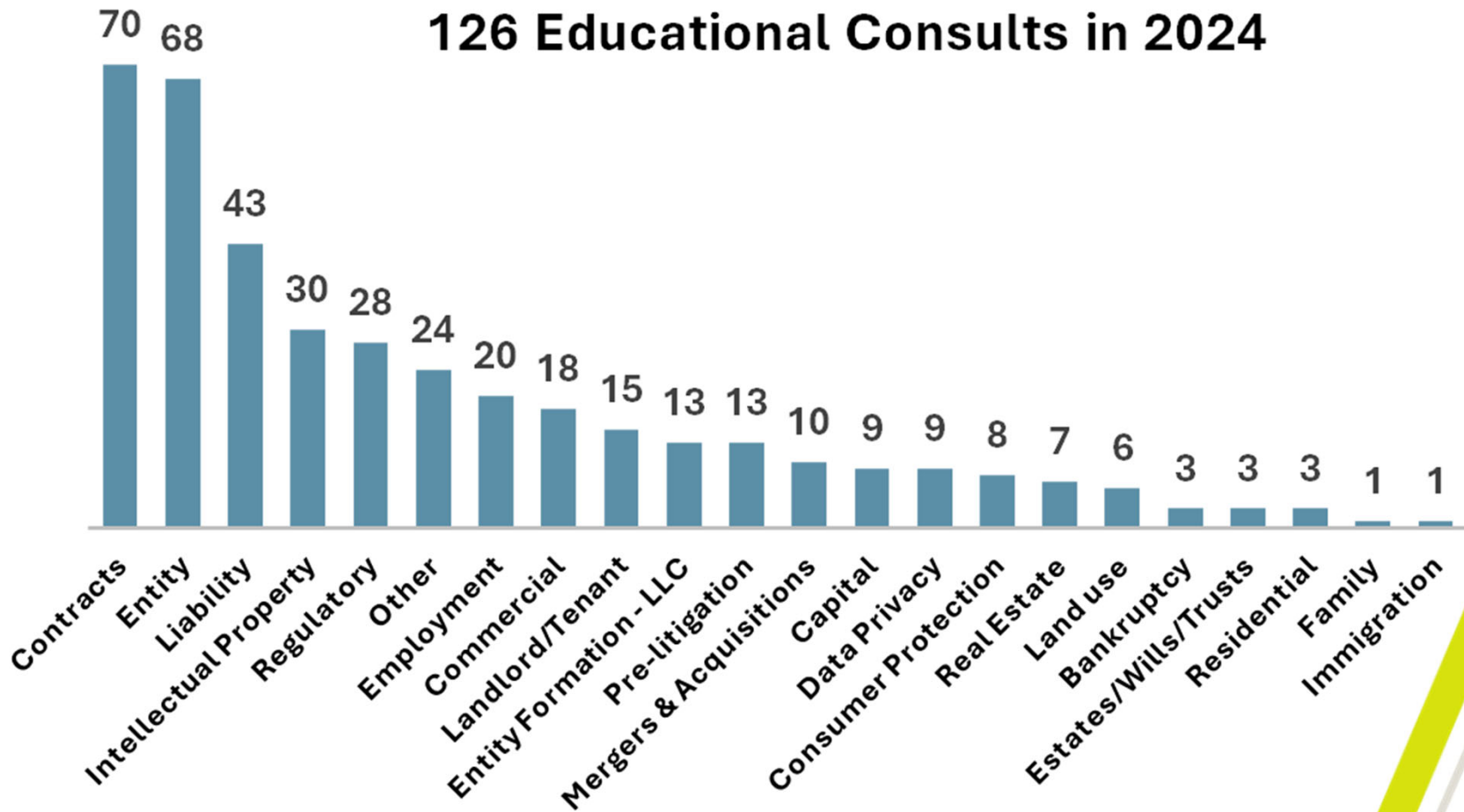


Entities Served in 2024 (t=288)





Frequency of Topics Discussed in 126 Educational Consults in 2024



~3 topics per consult

What do we hear from small businesses?

- I don't know what I don't know
- The law is confusing and scary
- I don't know whether, when, and how to work with an attorney
- Lawyers are inaccessible and costly
- Lawyers are not representative of me or my background
- I want to make sure I'm doing this right



Trends from 2024

- Interest in non-profits
 - Fiscal sponsrships
 - For-profit→non-profit
 - Non-profit alongside for-profit
- Flood recovery (2023 vs. 2024)
- Commercial leases (flood fallout)
 - Poorly-written leases
 - Landlord disputes
 - Relocations
- Death with dignity / medical assistance in dying
- Health coaching/mental health counseling



Trends from 2024

- Beneficial Ownership Information reporting awareness
- Data privacy awareness
- Transitions
 - Mergers & acquisitions, asset deals
 - Slow transfer
- Intellectual property interest
 - Esp. copyright/trademark
 - Infringement)
- Contract assistance
 - Making
 - Enforcing/defending
- Gluten-free and vegan food production
- Tourism/hospitality, especially agritourism
- ADUs and tiny homes





Thank you!

