

Civil Legal Needs and Barriers of Low- and Moderate-Income People in Hawai'i

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Key Findings of the 2007 Report:

- Only 1 in 5 low and moderate-income Hawai'i residents have their legal needs met. Legal service providers are able to help 1 in 3 of those who contact them.
- Unmet civil legal needs: housing (24%), family (23%), domestic violence (8%), & consumer (7%).
- Significant barriers to obtaining legal assistance in addition to inability to afford an attorney include language and cultural barriers, lack of knowledge of one's legal rights, lack of knowledge of available legal services, and difficulty in accessing legal services programs.
- There is one legal service attorney for every 2,291 persons living below 125% FPL.
- There is one private attorney for every 361 persons in the general population.

The Current Picture:

- Major economic recession resulting in increased demand for services. Some service providers have seen 20-30% increases in the number of calls that they are receiving requesting assistance.
- Service delivery continues to be high, on April 20, 2009, Domestic Violence Action Center, Hawai'i Immigrant Justice Center, Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, Mediation Center of the Pacific and Volunteer Legal Services Hawai'i served:

Method of Service Delivery	Total Contact
Client Telephone Contact	1,029
Telephone Consultation (Technical Assistance or Telephone Work on Behalf of a Client)	368
In-Person Client Contact	277
Number of Children in the Lives of Clients Served	595
Number of Court Appearances	36

- Over \$1.3 million were made in funding cuts this legislative session to legal service providers beginning July 1, 2009 with more cuts expected in the next few months.

Population Served by Legal Service Providers:

- Those below 250%, 200% and 125% of the federal poverty guidelines, in 2009 these guidelines were:

Persons in Household	125%	200%	250%
1	1,297	2,076	2,595
2	1,745	2,793	3,491
3	2,193	3,510	4,387
4	2,641	4,226	5,283
Add'l person	447	716	896

- In 2009, DBEDT issued its first self-sufficiency standard for Hawai'i, these figures for 2007 illustrated what it cost to live in Hawai'i without any public assistance:

	Self-Sufficiency	250% FPL	200% FPL	125% FPL
Honolulu	\$4,641	\$4,948	\$3,958	\$2,474
Hawai'i	\$4,139	\$4,948	\$3,958	\$2,474
Maui	\$5,044	\$4,948	\$3,958	\$2,474
Kauai	\$4,930	\$4,948	\$3,958	\$2,474

Members of the Legal Service Providers Consortium:

In 2008, these organizations opened over 23,000 cases and helping over 60,000 people gain access to core legal services critical to meeting basic necessities and ensuring individual rights:

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i

Protects individual freedoms guaranteed under the federal and state constitutions through legal action, legislative lobbying, and public education.

522-5900

www.acluhawaii.org

Domestic Violence Action Center

Provides civil legal representation and client advocacy for victims of domestic violence in the interest of safety and self-sufficiency. Services include legal helpline, on-site court assistance, and services to special populations.

531-3771

www.stoptheviolence.org

Hawai'i Disability Rights Center

The Hawaii Disability Rights Center is the protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities providing outreach, education, training, individual case advocacy and legal representation.

949-2922

www.hawaiidisabilityrights.org

The Mediation Center of the Pacific

Provides mediation and dispute resolution services that are affordable and accessible to resolve all types of matters including but not limited to: divorce, custody & visitation; landlord/tenant; workplace; civil rights; special education and more.

521-6767

www.mediatehawaii.org

Hawai'i Immigrant Justice Center (formerly Na Loio)

Provides legal assistance and case management services for low-income immigrants and children who are victims of abuse, human trafficking, torture, sexual assault, or stalking, and/or other immigration-related services.

536-8826 (1-800-208-8828)

www.hijcenter.org (under construction)

Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i

Provides legal assistance for low-income clients in the areas of basic need, including, but not limited to family, housing, public benefits, and consumer issues.

536-4302 (1-800-499-4302)

www.legalaidhawaii.org

Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation

Represents Native Hawaiians in their assertions of rights to land, natural resources, and related entitlements.

521-2302

www.nhlchi.org

University of Hawai'i Elder Law Program

Provides free legal services to seniors who are over 60 with financial need.

956-6544

<http://www.hawaii.edu/uhelp/>

Volunteer Legal Services Hawai'i

Provides free or reduced cost civil legal services, with volunteer attorneys, for low-income clients.

528-7046 (1-800-839-5200)

www.vlsh.org