

Appendix 2: Restore Core Legal Assistance Funding

Goal

Restore state funding for the low-income legal assistance infrastructure to 2010 levels. Core funding for low-income legal services at VLA and LSV is over \$350,000 less than it was in 2010 in actual dollars and when adjusted for inflation, the shortfall is almost \$1 million. The state's share of that deficit is over \$500,000.

Project Activities

The core infrastructure of Vermont's low-income legal assistance partnership is the network of staff attorneys and paralegals at VLA and LSV's five offices located across the state. That staff operates a toll-free helpline and a website to provide low-income Vermonters with the full range of legal services, from legal information and referrals, to counsel and advice, to full representation in every county in the state. As financial support has stagnated, staffing for actual representation in court has declined as VLA and LSV have been forced to shift to providing advice over the phone instead of full representation. The restoration of state support to 2010 levels would allow more than 500 Vermonters facing critical legal problems to get the legal representation they need.

Project Budget

The partnership is seeking an annual appropriation of \$250,000 as a down payment on the state's \$500,000 core funding shortfall. This funding would allow VLA to restore two full-time attorney positions lost due to lack of funding, and help support its share of the legal assistance helpline and website.

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