

How Legal Aid Helps Veterans

Our nation's veterans face significant challenges when returning to civilian life.

Out of **15.8 million** veterans in the United States, **1 in 10** lives in poverty and is eligible for LSC services.

Many factors contribute to veteran poverty, including:



Service-connected disabilities that make it difficult to work or maintain a steady income.



Mental health challenges like post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, anxiety and depression.



Barriers to employment like difficulty translating the specialized training and experiences during service to civilian job requirements.

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is the largest funder of civil legal aid in the United States.



LSC's 2022 Justice Gap Study reveals that low-income veterans need legal aid.

Low-income veteran households in 2022:

76%

experienced at least one civil legal problem in the last 12 months.

27%

experienced 10 or more civil legal problems.

16%

of problems received enough legal help to resolve the issue.



Low-income veterans are more likely to experience civil legal problems relating to housing, their discharge status and VA benefits.



Housing

Veterans are more likely to be **evicted** and experience **homelessness** than the general population.



Legal aid attorneys defend veterans against eviction and foreclosure.



Discharge Status

A veteran's discharge status **affects their eligibility** for VA benefits, healthcare, employment and housing.



Legal aid attorneys assist in the discharge review process and ensure veterans get what they have earned.



Obtaining VA benefits

Veterans may have difficulty obtaining or maintaining their VA benefits and may face **unlawful denials** of their claims.



Legal aid attorneys help veterans appeal unlawful denials of their claim.

LSC Serves Our Veterans

Legal Services Corporation (LSC) grantees provide critically needed legal services to veterans residing in **every zip code** across America.



44,000

In 2023, LSC grantees served 44,000 veteran households through casework.



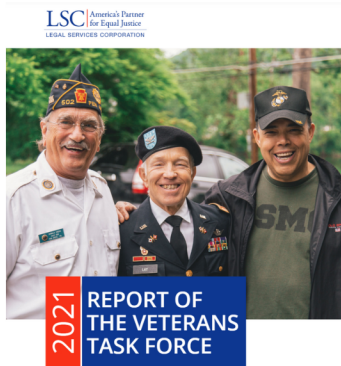
1 in 4

26% of veteran households served by LSC grantees are in the southeastern U.S.



Annual Veterans Day Forum

LSC consistently raises awareness of the unmet legal needs of veterans in an annual forum celebrating Veterans Day. In 2024, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs spoke about making sure our veterans have access to the justice that their brave service protected.



Veterans Taskforce

In January 2020, LSC established the Veterans Task Force to:

- Raise awareness about the civil legal issues veterans experience.
- Identify ways to strengthen relationships between civil legal aid providers and other organizations that serve veterans.
- Highlight model programs that provide effective, integrated services.
- Recommend strategies to encourage attorneys to provide free legal assistance to veterans.

In 2021, the taskforce released its report, shedding light on veterans' civil legal challenges and proposing strategies to enhance access to legal aid.



Partnerships with the VA

Many LSC grantees have partnerships with VA clinics in their area. These "medical-legal partnerships" connect healthcare providers with legal services and **improve health outcomes** by addressing the root causes of health problems. These partnerships also **save money** by reducing emergency room visits. Through such partnerships, veterans can get help on issues like VA benefits, discharge upgrades, sealing/expungement, debt, family law, advanced directives, housing and more.

For example, **Bay Area Legal Services** in Florida partners with the VA to provide free legal help to veterans enrolled for care. Veterans can get help on issues like veterans benefits, discharge upgrades, sealing/expungement, debt, family law, advanced directives, housing, and more.

Every dollar invested in LSC programs helps aid veterans, the communities they live in and the American justice system.