



Of Access to Justice in the Last Frontier

Nikole Nelson, Executive Director
Alaska Legal Services Corporation

About Alaska Legal Services Corporation

- Established in 1967 as a private non-profit law firm.
- **Mission:** to provide high quality civil legal services to low income and disadvantaged people and communities to protect their safety, their health and to promote family stability.
- Only comprehensive civil legal aid provider in Alaska



Direct Benefits Across Alaska

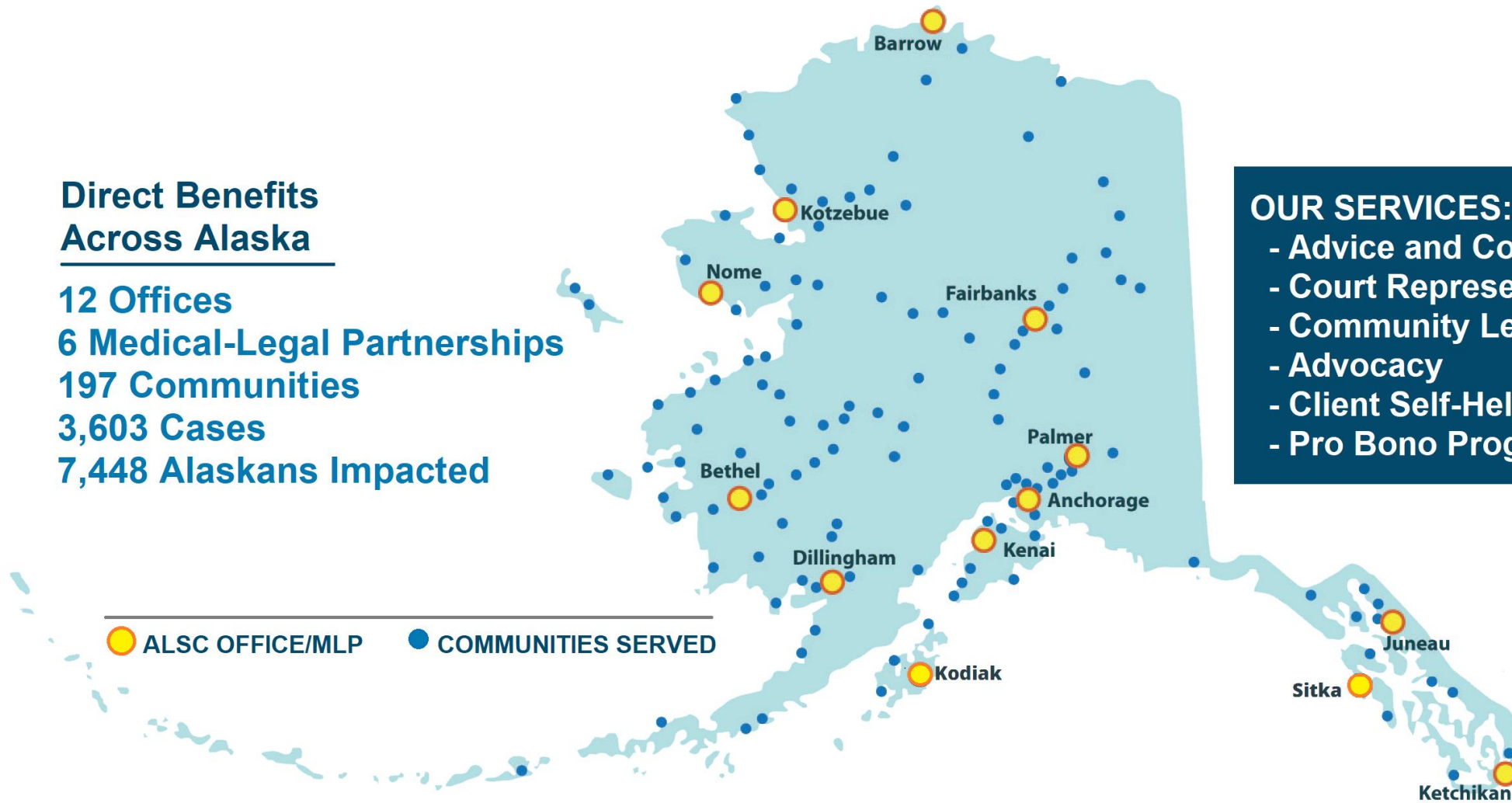
12 Offices

6 Medical-Legal Partnerships

197 Communities

3,603 Cases

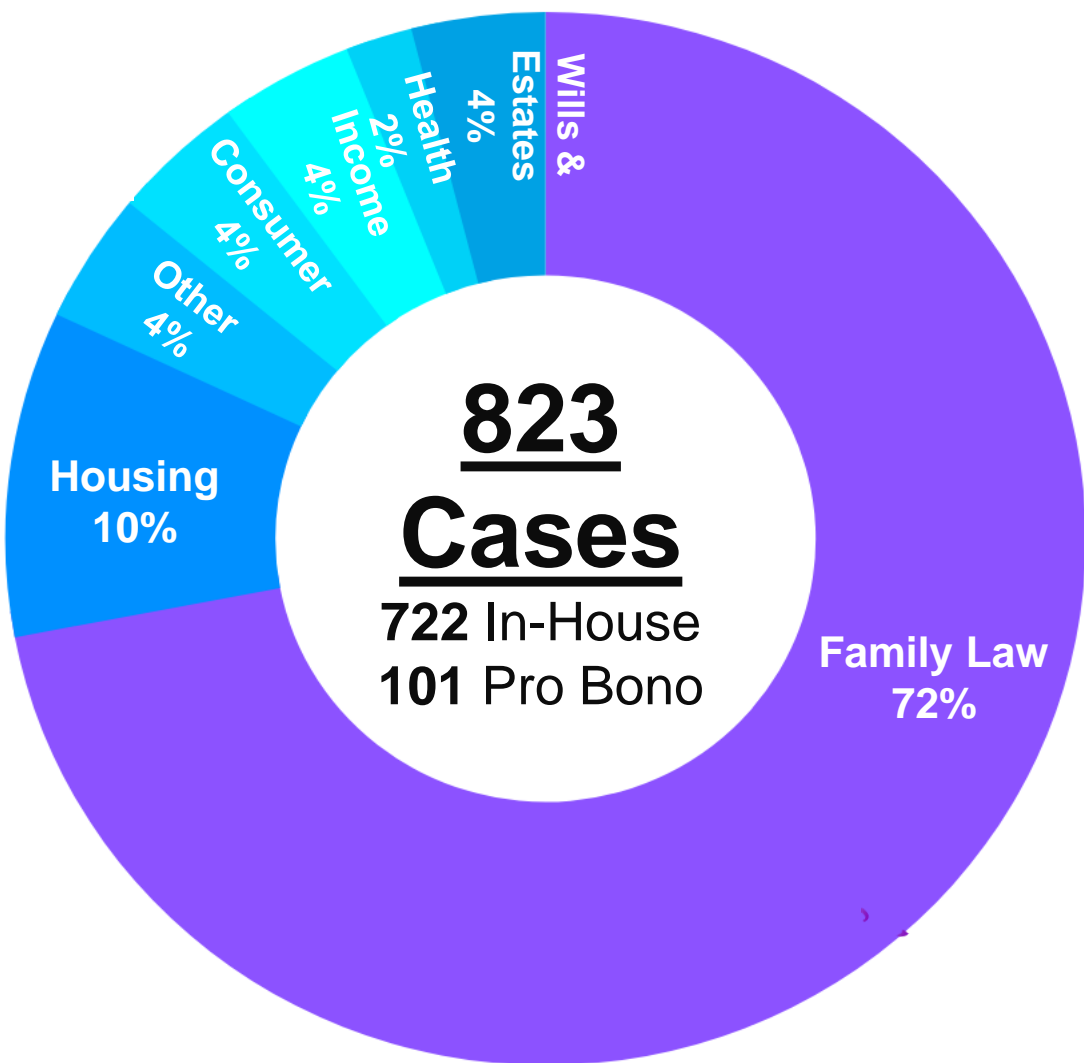
7,448 Alaskans Impacted



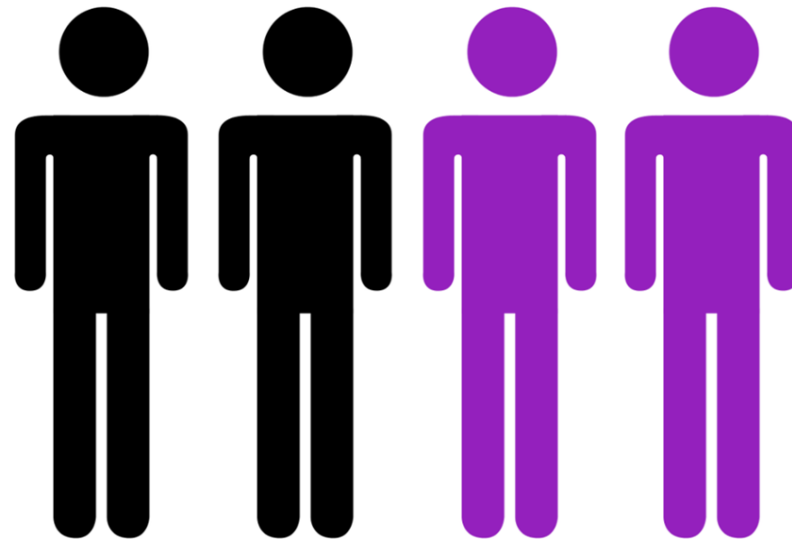
OUR SERVICES:

- Advice and Counseling
- Court Representation
- Community Legal Clinics
- Advocacy
- Client Self-Help
- Pro Bono Program

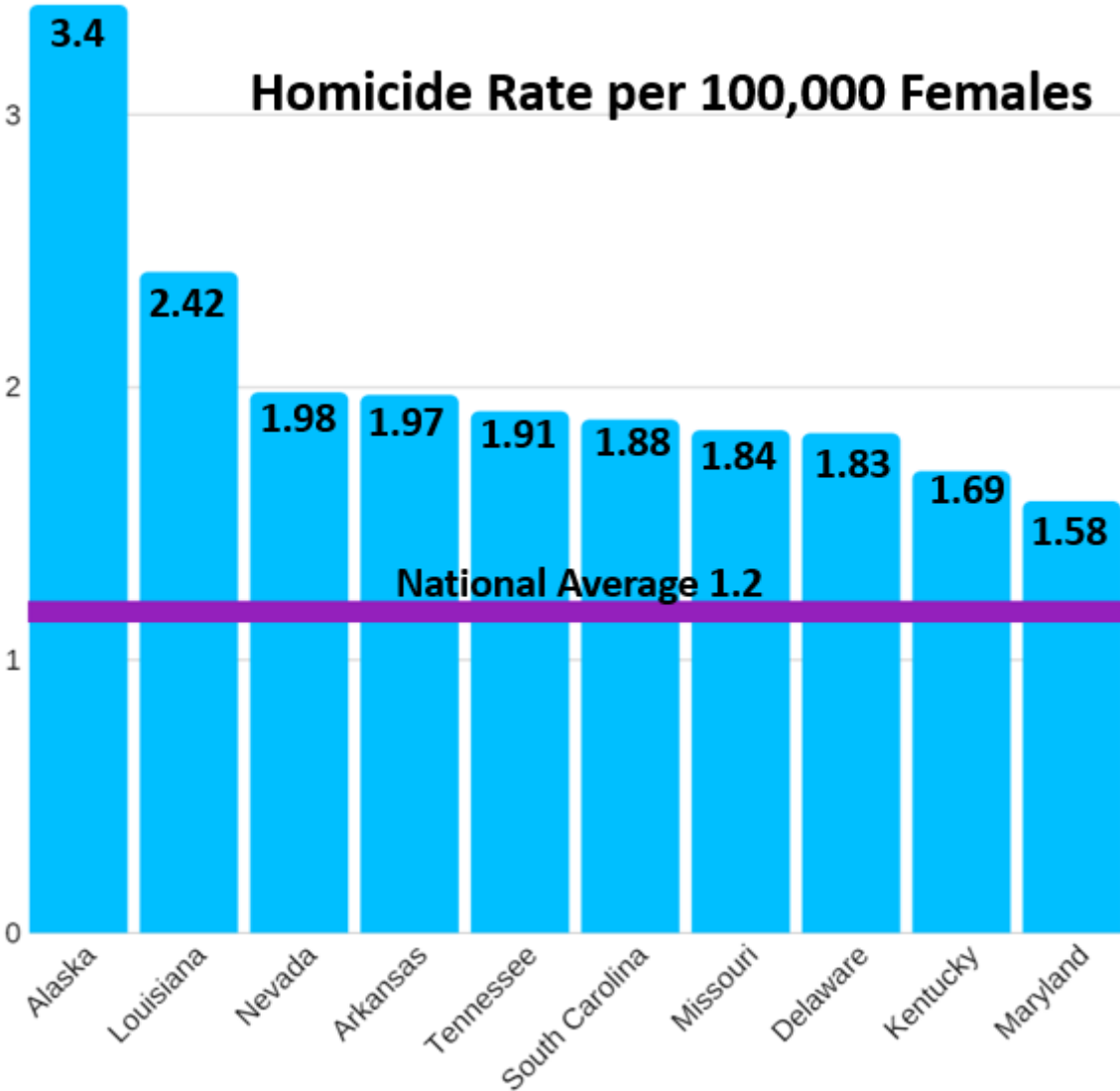
2019 ALSC Domestic Violence Service Numbers



Roughly **50%** of adult women in Alaska experience intimate partner or sexual violence in their lifetimes.



Alaska has the highest homicide rate for female victims killed by a male perpetrator, and is **3x the national average.**



Lawyers make a Difference

- The CDC lists civil legal protections as one of the main strategies needed to prevent intimate partner violence and its consequences across a survivor's lifespan.
- DV survivors rate the filing of a protective order as one of two of the most effective tools for stopping DV, 2nd only to leaving the abuser.
- **83%** of victims represented by an attorney successfully obtained a protective order, compared to just 32% of victims without an attorney.



MLK Day Legal Clinic in Juneau, AK

Lawyers Make a Difference

The provision of legal assistance in a DV matter can lead to reductions in violence by serving as an access point for women to get legal assistance on related matters.

Studies have found that women who obtain protective orders report feeling safer and more empowered, better about themselves, and a sense of overall life improvement:

- **70%** reported the order was helpful in communicating to their partner that their actions were wrong
- **90%** of women who obtained temporary orders of protection felt good about their decision to obtain one
- **87%** of respondents believed that reporting the violence to a court “helped stop the physical abuse.”



Collateral Legal Issues: Financial Abuse

Though financial abuse occurs in 99% of DV cases, 78% of Americans do not recognize financial abuse as a form of DV.

- Examples of financial abuse:
 - Forcing a partner to miss work
 - Harassing a partner at work
 - Controlling how money is spent
 - Withholding money or basic living resources
 - Giving a partner an “allowance”
 - Stealing money, credit, property, or identity
 - Forcing a partner to file fraudulent legal financial documents or overspend on credit cards



Collateral Legal Issues: Homelessness

- Half of all homeless women and children are fleeing DV.
- Nearly 38% of all DV victims become homeless at some point in their lives.
- 22% of DV programs offer emergency but no transitional housing.
- Victims who visit emergency shelters most often return to their abuser due to lack of alternative options.



People wait in the nightly line to get into Brother Francis, the largest homeless shelter in Anchorage.
Photograph: Ash Adams/The Guardian

Civil Legal Aid Challenges

Reasons why:

1. Do not know where to find help.
2. Do not know if the problem is "legal".
3. Decide to deal with the problem alone.

80%

of low-income Americans do not seek help for their legal problems.

Source: See Legal Services Corporation, The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low Income Americans (2017)

There are only .64 civil legal aid attorneys available for every

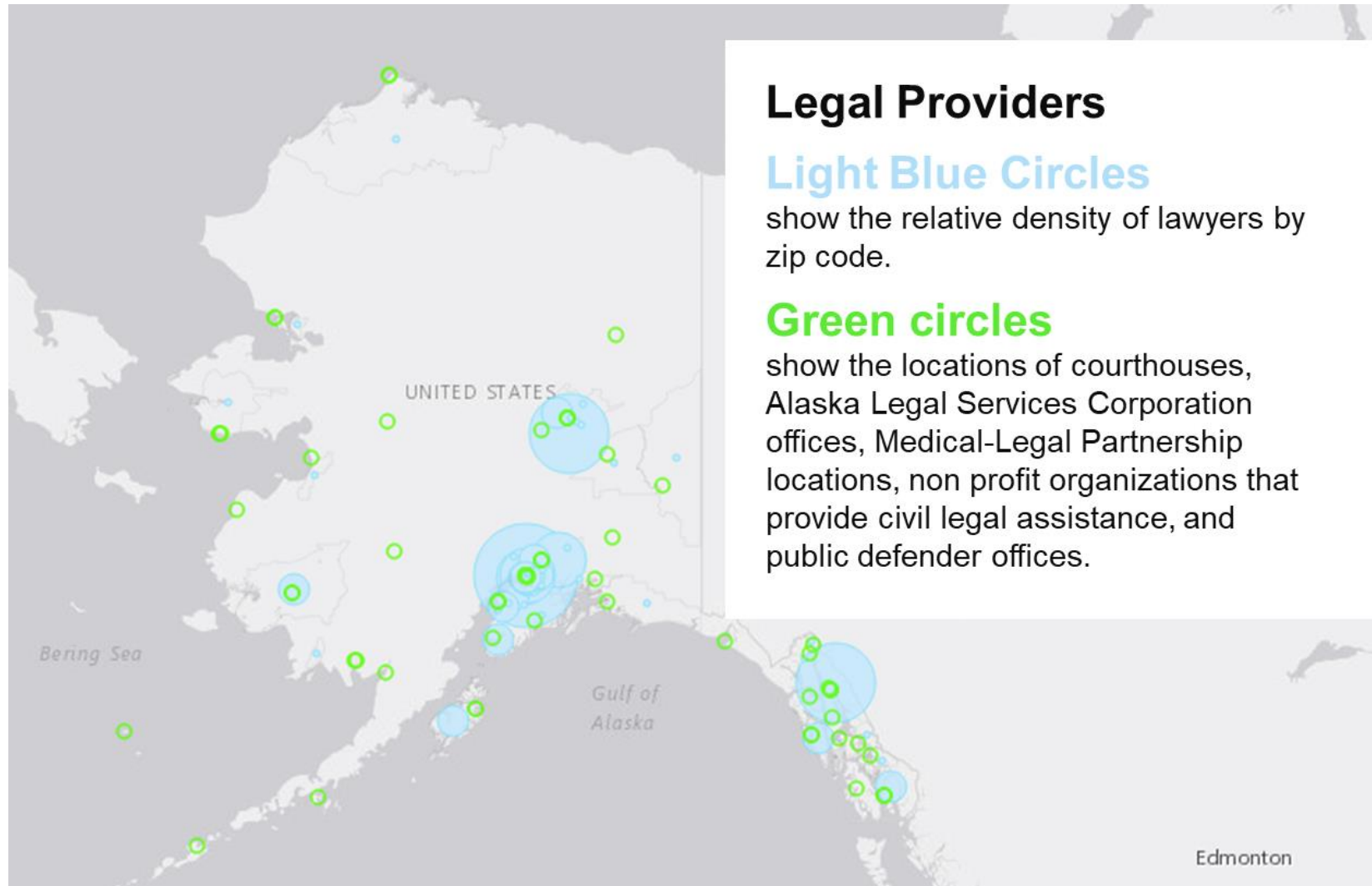


100,000 Americans in poverty.

Source: 2016 Justice Index, A Project of the National Center for Access to Justice.

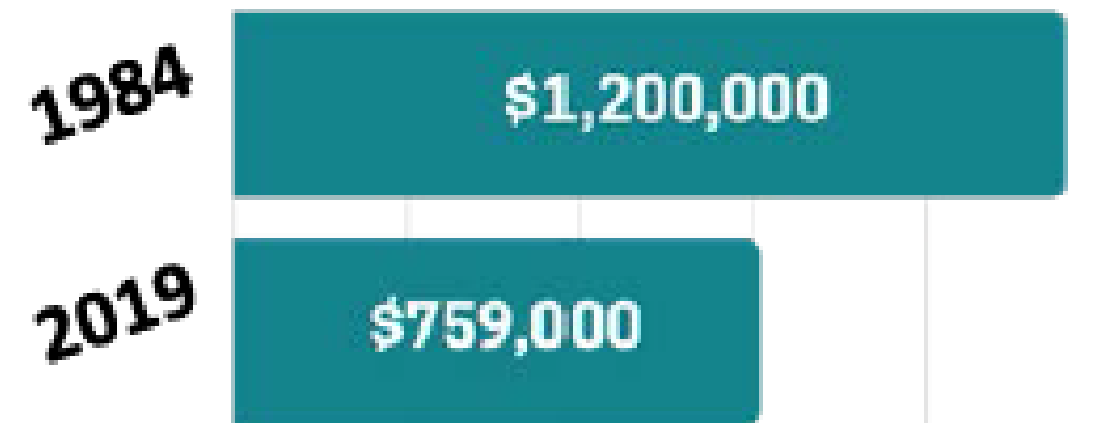


Alaska's Justice EcoSystem



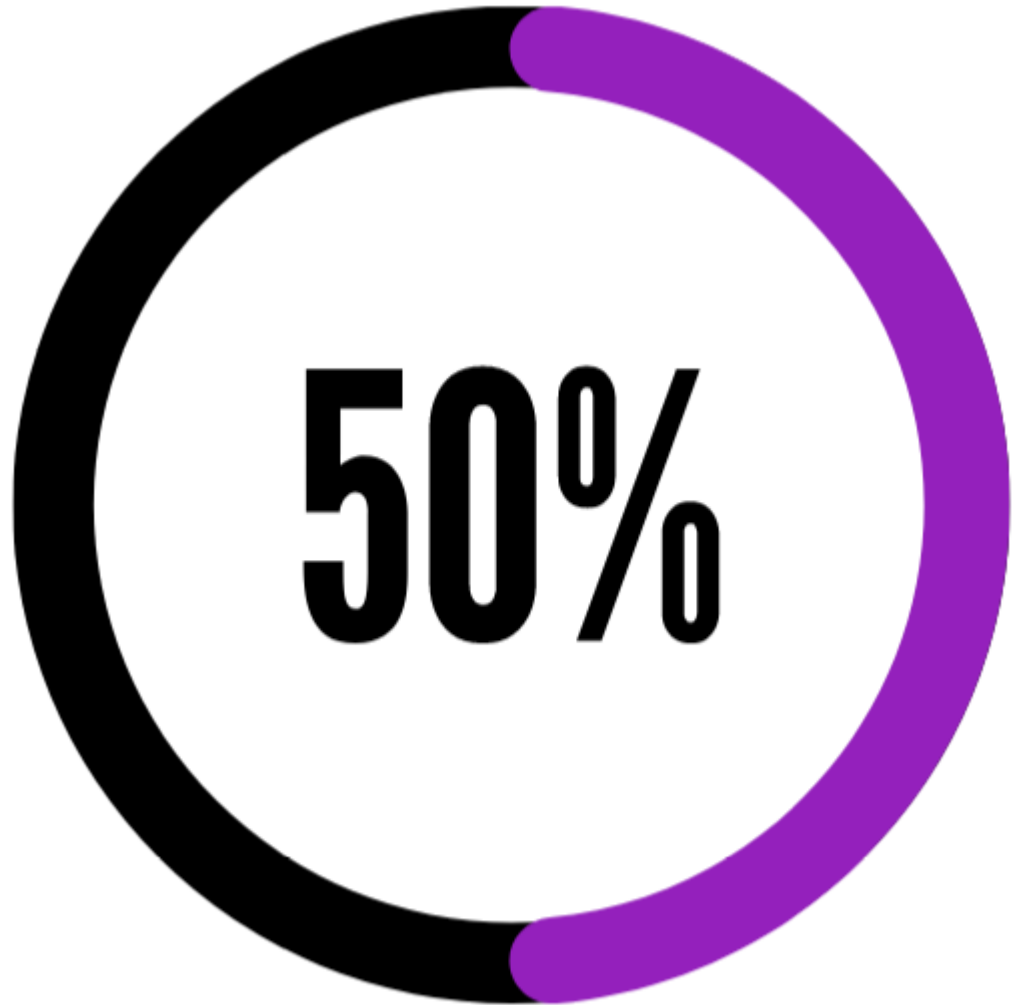
Decrease in Funding & Increase in Need

ALSC STATE FUNDING



ELIGIBLE CLIENT POPULATION





In 2019, ALSC received **1,178** applications for help from domestic violence victims.

Nearly **50%** were unable to receive services due to lack of resources.

ALSC Pro Bono Program

118



Over **118** attorneys, law students and volunteer professionals donate time to help Alaskans in need with civil issues.

4,239



Approximately **4,239** hours are donated for direct casework, legal clinics and education, and special projects.

\$635,850



Donated services have an estimated dollar value of **\$635,850** based on a conservative estimate of \$150 per hour.



Contact

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