



TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Lacey G. Simpson, Acting City Manager

DATE: January 24, 2021

RE: **Alaska Legal Services Corporation's Quarterly Activity and Financial Reports – October Through December 2021**

Pursuant to paragraph (a) of Section 14 of the 2021 Community Agency Funding Agreement between the City of Ketchikan and Alaska Legal Services Corporation, attached for City Council review are copies of the agency's quarterly activity and financial reports for the period of October through December 2021. Should Councilmembers have questions regarding the reports, staff can attempt to respond accordingly.

January 21, 2022

Via Email

City of Ketchikan
Attn: Community Agency Grant Committee
334 Front Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901
Email: karla@ktn-ak.us
dianeb@ktn-ak.us

Re: 2021 Community Agency Funding
Q4 & 2021 Cumulative Activity Report

Dear Grant Committee:

Enclosed please find Alaska Legal Services Corporation's quarterly activity report for October to December 2021 and a Cumulative Report for 2021.

Please feel free to call or email with any questions. I can be reached at (907) 222-4503 or mhummm@alsc-law.org and our Southeast Supervising Attorney, Heather Parker, can be contacted at (907)586-5963 or hparker@alsc-law.org.

Sincerely yours,



Maggie Humm
Deputy Director

Enclosures: as stated

Cc: Tracey Janssen, ALSC CFO
Heather Parker, ALSC Supervising Attorney
Linda Keizer, ALSC Paralegal

**Alaska Legal Services Corporation
Elder and Family Advocacy Project
Fourth Quarter Report 2021
(October to December 2021)**

ALSC thanks the City of Ketchikan for its continued support of our Elder & Family Law Advocacy Project. We are pleased to report that not only are we continuing to meet our goals and objectives for this project, but we have once again exceeded our client service numbers.

This quarter, ALSC provided Ketchikan residents with assistance in a wide variety of matters, with housing, SNAP, and income maintenance cases at the forefront of both direct legal assistance and community legal education events. ALSC continues to undertake a number of activities to proactively help the client community face the challenges of the pandemic and to address the increase in demand for services. Our attorneys and advocates are regularly updating the legal information and COVID-19 resources on our website, alaskalawhelp.org; our statewide landlord-tenant hotline is offered four times per week; and we have offered numerous virtual education events.

Summary of Total Served

Between October 1st and December 31st, 2021:

- ALSC received 25 new applications. Due to a lack of staff resources, conflicts, or other eligibility reasons, 6 cases from City households were rejected during this time;
- ALSC served a total of 42 individual clients in 47 separate cases (4 clients had multiple legal issues) and had a total reach of 81 household members this quarter;
- All 42 of the clients served were at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines, with 33 clients below 125 percent;
- Twenty-eight (28) clients self-identified as having a disability; and
- Fifteen (15) clients were age 60 or older and 11 were age 65 or older.

ALSC continues to give priority to elders, individuals with disabilities, and those at risk of homelessness, facing domestic violence, or struggling with reductions of critical medical care.

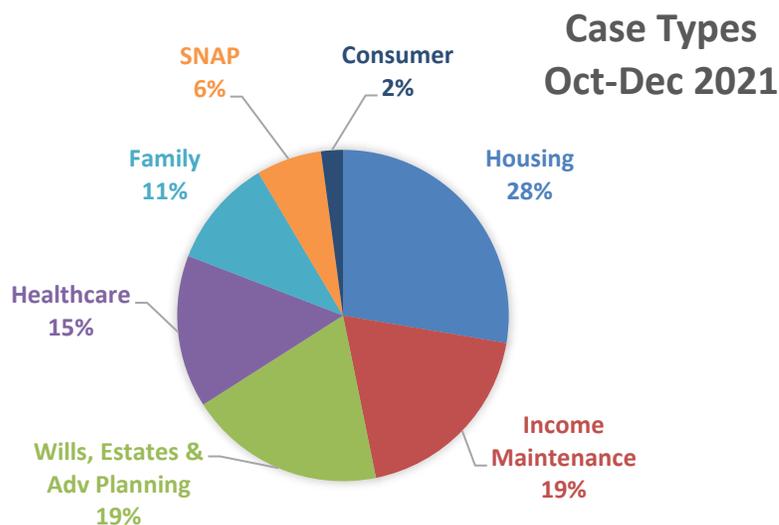
Goals & Objectives

Goal #1: Program participants will avoid domestic violence, homelessness, and poverty through civil legal representation.

Objective #1: Each quarter, between 10-12 City households will receive legal advice, assistance with legal forms, representation in court, or other forms of direct representation to help maintain

family safety, housing, disability rights and benefits, income maintenance, or legal protections for seniors.

This objective was met and even quadrupled this quarter. Our total caseload of 47 cases had a wide range of case types as indicated in the chart below.



This quarter there was a high demand for assistance with housing issues, including landlord-tenant problems. We also saw a high demand for help with social security matters, SNAP benefits, healthcare, and family issues.

Objective #2: ALSC will track specific outcomes, including financial benefits, for Social Security, debt collection, income maintenance, landlord tenant, and foreclosure cases.

This objective was met during the first quarter. Between October 1 – December 31, 2021, ALSC resolved 27 cases with the following outcomes:

- Six (6) clients received assistance with housing matters
- Six (6) clients received assistance with income maintenance matters
- Six (6) clients received assistance with wills, estates, or advanced planning
- Four (4) client received assistance with healthcare matters
- Three (3) clients received assistance with SNAP matters
- Two (2) clients received assistance with family law matters

We had tremendous success in many of these closed matters:

SNAP Benefits (Foodstamps)

In one SNAP case, ALSC has been representing an elderly, disabled resident in an appeal to the Superior Court regarding calculation of SNAP benefits for her household. The State had

determined that our client was entitled to no food benefits because she lived with an adult daughter. This decision made it difficult for our client to meet her nutritional needs. ALSC filed a challenge to the State's decision and, after a long wait, we recently received a favorable ruling from the court. The decision is a win for the client, who will now receive SNAP benefits *and* could potentially make it easier for other elderly and disabled Alaskans living in multi-generational households to obtain food benefits.

ALSC successfully assisted two other City residents with SNAP matters this quarter by ensuring that they received the correct amount of food benefits. Throughout the pandemic, clients eligible for SNAP have been entitled to additional benefits; however, a number of Alaskans have not timely been receiving those benefits from the State of Alaska, or have not been receiving the correct amounts.

Access to Safe Housing

This quarter, ALSC resolved a case for a client who was living in uninhabitable conditions. This was a complex case involving extensive litigation that lasted for several months. The outcome was life changing for the client, who is now able to start fresh in a safe and clean living environment.

Five other cases closed quarter also related to housing issues. Of those, two clients received full representation in superior court, and one received significant advice and guidance on representing himself in eviction hearings. Of those three cases, two were dismissed, allowing the tenant and family to remain in their homes.

Access to Health Care

One of the cases closed this quarter related to access to health care under the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Waiver program through the State of Alaska. In this case, a disabled individual was denied several hours of paid caregiver benefits. On appeal, the hours were reinstated and the client can now remain in their home, living independently in their community. These hours are valued at approximately \$62,010. This financial benefit flows to the Ketchikan community as this money will be used to pay for the client's care.

Income Maintenance

Six of the cases closed this quarter related to facilitating assistance from the Social Security Administration (SSA). ALSC assisted clients in appealing alleged overpayments, submitting information to SSA, and finding out more about the status of their benefits. In one case closed this quarter, a client's alleged overpayment of \$928 was waived on appeal due to SSA error.

Estate Planning Cases

Three wills were finalized this quarter, allowing individuals peace of mind and ability to determine the distribution of their estates.

Family Matters

Finally, ALSC continued its telephonic Family Law Clinic, which has allowed us to expand our services throughout Southeast Alaska. In the past, ALSC has been able to offer only very limited assistance on family law issues due to the resources required for each individual case. During the pandemic, ALSC's Southeast offices have altered how they handle family law cases and in doing

so we have increased our capacity to serve more people. Through this clinic, individuals sign up for 30-minute slots to meet with an attorney for individual advice over the phone. Two cases closed this quarter were clients served through that program.

Goal #2: Program participants will resolve non-legal issues that put them at risk of domestic violence, homelessness and poverty, and work toward self-sufficiency.

Objective #1: ALSC will work in coordination with other social service agencies so that clients get a wrap-around team when needed to help resolve a combination of legal and other issues.

During this quarter, ALSC continued to partner with other social service agencies to provide clients a wrap-around team approach. ALSC also continues to partner with Ketchikan Indian Community, Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Community Connections, and other local service providers to answer questions and resolve other, non-legal issues.

Objective #2: ALSC will attend regular community meetings with partner agencies to stay updated on other program information and collaborate on team approaches to resolving individual client issues.

ALSC staff continue to collaborate with partner agencies both to keep them updated on programming and also to take a team approach to resolving clients' issues. ALSC has been regularly attending and presenting at monthly SEANET meetings with several community partners.

Additionally this quarter, ALSC offered a few live trainings for all community members. Those are discussed in more detail under Goal #3.

Objective #3: ALSC will work with partner agencies to ensure that their staff is informed of the scope of our services and make appropriate referrals.

ALSC's paralegal has connected with other agency and government staff to ensure that appropriate referrals are being made to ALSC, that we are able to respond to referrals quickly, and that appropriate releases of information are in place to allow agencies to work together efficiently to serve our mutual clients.

Goal #3: Increase knowledge in the target population re: the existence of civil legal rights and remedies.

Objective #1: ALSC will engage in at least ten community legal education events in 2021, including outreach activities, legal presentations, clinics, and hosting information tables at community fairs.

While no in-person trainings were offered this quarter due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ALSC continues to provide resources to Ketchikan providers and to the Ketchikan community.

ALSC hosted multiple Facebook Live legal education events this quarter including:

- October 1st The Basics of Debt Collection
- October 15th The Basics on Repairs in Rental Units
- November 10th P-EBT During the Pandemic (pandemic food benefits for families in public schools that have been impacted by COVID-related closures). This event was held in partnership with the Food Bank of Alaska and State of Alaska.

These sessions have been well attended and have provided individuals across the state the opportunity to connect with attorneys and, at times, state officials. Links to these events are available on ALSC's Facebook page.

ALSC has been regularly attending monthly SEANET meetings with several community partners.

ALSC continues to offer a free landlord-tenant hotline four times a week. This toll-free line is staffed by volunteer attorneys every Monday-Thursday, from 6-8 p.m. As reported previously, this hotline was expanded from 2 days per week to 4 days per week in response to the increased demand for assistance regarding housing and eviction issues in Southeast and throughout the state.

Objective #2: ALSC will maintain an updated library of civil legal resources on its alaskalawhelp.org website, and offer educational materials through handouts and brochures available in our office, partner agencies offices, and at community resource fairs.

ALSC continually updates information on alaskalawhelp.org, an online legal resource library. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, ALSC staff have worked to keep this website updated with the latest information regarding legal issues that are arising from the pandemic including housing, domestic violence, workers' rights, debt issues, public benefits, and more.

**Alaska Legal Services Corporation
Elder and Family Advocacy Project**

Cumulative Report 2021 – Goals and Objectives

January - December 2021

From January 1 – December 31, 2021, Alaska Legal Services received 89 new applications for assistance under this Project.

A total of 89 cases¹ were closed under this project during the grant year. Of these, 33 were rejected due to lack of resources, eligibility, conflicts, or other reasons, and 56 cases were closed after clients received services. An additional 21 cases remain open to date.

The types of cases that were closed were as follows (*indicates increase from prior year):

- 15 related to landlord/tenant or other housing cases;*
- 9 related to access to Medicaid/healthcare benefits;
- 9 related to wills, power of attorney, or advanced care directives;*
- 9 related to SSI, SSDI, or other income maintenance;
- 8 related to family law;
- 5 related to access to SNAP;* and
- 1 related to debt, consumer finance or bankruptcy

Of the 56 cases closed, 48 individual clients were served (some clients had multiple legal issues), with a total reach of 85 household members.

Of the 48 clients served: all of were at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines; thirty-seven (37) were at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines; thirty-four (34) self-identified as having a disability; sixteen (16) were age 60 or older; and 13 were age 65 or older.

All goals were met regarding outreach as well. While ALSC was not able to offer additional in-person trainings due to COVID, it has regularly provided updates at SEANET community meetings, and has offered resources through Facebook Live trainings, updates to alaskalawhelp.org, and our statewide Alaska Landlord-Tenant Hotline.

¹ These are not all of the same 89 cases that were received as new applications in 2021. That the number of applications and the number of closed cases are the same is a coincidence.