



FACT SHEET - CIVIL LEGAL AID IN ARKANSAS

The Facts – Federal Funding

- Arkansas received \$2,000,000 less in 2006 than it did in 1995.

The Facts – State and Other Funding

- In 2005, for the first time legal services in Arkansas began receiving court fees from an act passed by the state legislature. Revenue of \$342,000 resulted from this action during fiscal year 2006. Arkansas joined 26 other states receiving similar funding.
- Arkansas IOLTA funding (interest on lawyer trust accounts) fell from \$899,000 in 2002 to \$250,000 in 2005 due to low interest rates.

The Facts – Arkansans We Serve

- Arkansas is ranked 49th in dollars spent per poor person on civil legal aid.
- 16% of Arkansans live below the federal poverty level compared to 12.4% nationally.
- In 9 Delta counties more than 25% of the population lives in poverty. Six of those same counties are among the ten poorest counties in the U. S.
- Fully 1 out of 5 Arkansans meets the financial eligibility guidelines for legal aid programs.
- Demand for civil legal aid for the poor is increasing and is expected to accelerate.

The Facts – Impact Today

- There are currently only 37 attorneys and 11 paralegals providing aid to 555,000 eligible Arkansans.
- The number of cases handled on a *pro bono* basis [volunteer efforts by private practice attorneys] was unchanged from 2001 to 2006.
- There were 27,487 calls for legal aid in 2005. During the year 10,570 cases were processed and closed, and 3,456 remained open at year-end.
- Some 13,461 individuals asked for assistance but could not be served.

The Facts – Making a Future Impact

- Currently 27 states provide state appropriations for legal services – but Arkansas is not one of them.
- It costs \$ 104,000 to provide a legal aid attorney, legal support staff, space, supplies and equipment for one year.