

Missouri Legal Services

Legal aid programs providing free legal help to the low-income and disadvantaged in Missouri



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LSC Estimates Grantees Would Need \$2.5 Billion to Address Eviction Surge

WASHINGTON – The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) has calculated it would cost \$2,567,000,000 for its grantees to meet the legal needs of low-income Americans at risk of eviction.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt the lives and financial security of people across the country, experts are warning of a growing evictions crisis. Many states initially adopted rent moratoriums or halted court proceedings in eviction cases. A federal moratorium on evictions expired June 24 and a second is set to expire at the end of August. As these measures expire, experts predict a dramatic surge in the number of eviction cases. In a recent survey of LSC-funded legal services organizations, 95% of LSC grantees reported a sharp increase in eviction cases even with existing freezes. Unemployment has hit renters particularly hard, as they make up a disproportionate share of service-sector jobs that disappeared under stay-at-home orders.

In order to better understand this impending crisis, LSC analyzed the scope of the problem and estimated the cost to provide legal aid to American families on the brink of eviction. LSC estimates that more than 5.13 million U.S. households are currently eligible for LSC-funded legal assistance and at risk of eviction. LSC's eligibility standard is 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

LSC estimates a legal cost of \$500 per eviction case. That makes the total dollar amount needed to address the legal needs stemming from the eviction surge more than \$2.5 billion. The vast majority of individuals facing eviction in the U.S. do not have legal representation. This analysis estimates the cost to provide adequate resources to represent people in eviction cases.

“These data show that the health and economic crises have expanded the justice gap into a justice canyon — particularly as to housing and evictions,” said LSC President Ronald S. Flagg.

[Read LSC's analysis for more information.](#)

Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is an independent nonprofit established by Congress in 1974 to provide financial support for civil legal aid to low-income Americans. The Corporation currently provides funding to 132 independent nonprofit legal aid programs in every state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.

Reprinted from LSC Article Dated August 4, 2020.

Printed: October 23, 2020

<http://www.lsmo.org/node/886/lsc-estimates-grantees-would-need-25-billion-address-eviction-surge>

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