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Iowa Legal Aid received a generous grant award from Iowa's Civil Reparations Trust Fund to expand our capacity to provide critical civil legal services to vulnerable Veterans and rural Iowans. We are pleased to submit this report detailing our work with these populations. We have included data below for the periods of April 23, 2025 to October 19, 2025 and October 1, 2024 to October 19, 2025

Legal Services for Veterans since April 23, 2025

Since April 23, 2025, Iowa Legal Aid helped secure income, housing, and safety from domestic violence for 270 Veterans. Our work benefitted 611 Veterans and family members, including 130 children. We secured \$242,407 in benefits for our Veteran clients.

Cases

Housing: Forty percent of our Veterans' cases were for housing issues. Our legal team worked with Veterans on 86 eviction cases, helping prevent immediate homelessness for 257 Veterans and family members, including 20 children. Eleven percent of our Veteran clients reported that they were living in shelters, with friends, or were homeless. Our attorneys worked with them to address legal issues that were contributing to their housing instability.

Income Stability: Protecting or increasing income accounted for 26% of our Veterans' cases. We helped clients avoid garnishment of their income, obtain public benefits, and resolve issues with food stamps, unemployment, Social Security Disability Insurance, and Medicaid.

Family Stability: Twenty percent of our Veterans' cases since April 23, 2025 involved family issues. We prioritize cases involving domestic abuse, and we helped Veterans leave unsafe situations, obtain protective orders, file for divorces, gain custody of children, and obtain possession of their family homes.

Miscellaneous: Fourteen percent of our Veterans' cases were for a wide variety of miscellaneous issues, including wills and estates, drivers' licenses, and advance directives/powers of attorney.

Ninety-six percent of Veterans' cases had favorable outcomes that helped them achieve their goals. They avoided immediate homelessness, they gained freedom from domestic violence through divorce, protection orders, custody of minor children, and possession of the family home, and they protected or increased their incomes. All Veterans learned about their rights and options under Iowa law.

Demographics

Our Veteran clients were:

- 25% female, 75% male
- 60% people with disabilities
- 77% White; 15% Black; 4% more than one race; 4% other
- 6% Hispanic

Ages

- 0-19 = 0%
- 20-39 = 22%
- 40-59 = 33%
- 60+ = 45%

Area Median Income (AMI)

- Less than 30% of AMI = 48% (14% reported that they had no income at all)
- 30% to 49% of AMI = 22%
- 50% to 79% of AMI = 20%
- 80% + of AMI = 10%

Legal Services for Veterans since October 1, 2024

Since October 1, 2024, Iowa Legal Aid provided civil legal assistance for 656 Veterans. Our work benefitted 1,289 Veterans and family members, including 299 children. We secured \$276,139 in benefits for these clients. Ninety-eight percent of Veterans' cases had favorable outcomes that helped them achieve their goals.

Cases

- Housing: Forty-four percent of our Veterans' cases were for housing issues. Our legal team worked with Veterans on 227 eviction cases, helping prevent immediate homelessness for 491 Veterans and family members, including 66 children. Nine percent of our Veteran clients reported that they were living in shelters, with friends, or were homeless.
- Income Stability: Protecting or increasing income accounted for 24% of our Veterans' cases.
- Family Stability: Sixteen percent of our Veterans' cases involved family issues, and these cases primarily involved domestic violence.
- Miscellaneous: Sixteen percent of our Veterans' cases were for miscellaneous issues.

Demographics

Our Veteran clients were:

- 24% female, 76% male
- 62% people with disabilities
- 78% White; 14% Black; 3% more than one race; 3% other; 1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 1% Native American
- 5% Hispanic

Ages

- 0-19 = 0%
- 20-39 = 20%
- 40-59 = 33%
- 60+ = 47%

Area Median Income (AMI)

- Less than 30% of AMI = 50% (12% reported that they had no income at all)
- 30% to 49% of AMI = 23%
- 50% to 79% of AMI = 17%
- 80% + of AMI = 10%

Success Story

“Ted,” an older Veteran, contacted Iowa Legal Aid after his wife passed away. He was distressed because he had received a large hospital bill for his wife’s illness that was not paid by insurance. Ted relied solely on his Social Security income, and he did not have the resources to pay the bill.

The Iowa Legal Aid attorney reviewed the case and determined that Ted’s income was protected from garnishment, and the hospital could not force him to pay. The attorney also talked with Ted about applying for financial assistance from the hospital to either reduce or eliminate the bill. The attorney provided Ted with referrals to the Area Agency on Aging and other resources that would help him pay his bills on his reduced income.

Ted was grateful for Iowa Legal Aid’s assistance, saying “it feels like a weight has been lifted off me.”

Legal Services for Rural Iowans since April 23, 2025

Since April 23, 2025, Iowa Legal Aid has helped 2,593 low-income rural Iowa residents with their civil legal issues. Our help benefited 6,685 total household members, including 2,730 children. We secured \$1,928,911 in benefits for our rural clients.

Cases

Family Stability: Thirty-seven percent of our rural cases since April 23 involved family issues. Iowa Legal Aid prioritizes family law cases involving domestic violence. We helped residents obtain protective orders, file for divorce, gain custody of their children, and obtain possession of their family homes.

Housing: Thirty-five percent of our rural residents’ cases involved housing. Eviction continues to be a prevalent issue across the state; in 2024, landlords in Iowa’s rural counties filed 4,799 evictions with the courts. During this reporting period, Iowa Legal Aid closed 636 eviction cases, helping 1,645 rural residents avoid immediate homelessness. Other housing-related issues involved mortgage foreclosures, public housing, and federally subsidized housing.

Income Stability: Protecting or increasing income accounted for 21% of our cases. We helped clients with issues including bankruptcy, wage garnishment, deceptive sales practices, taxes, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security Disability Insurance, unemployment insurance, and food stamps.

Miscellaneous: In the remaining 7% of cases, we helped families with a wide variety of issues, including wills and estates, drivers’ licenses, and advanced directives/powers of attorney.

Ninety-nine percent of rural residents' cases had favorable outcomes that helped them achieve their goals. They avoided immediate homelessness, they gained freedom from domestic violence through divorce, protection orders, custody of minor children, and possession of the family home, and they protected or increased their incomes. All residents learned about their rights under Iowa law.

Demographics

- 74% female, 26% male
- 36% people with disabilities
- 87% White; 6% Black; 3% other; 3% more than one race; 1% Native American
- 8% Hispanic

Ages

- 0-19 = 1%
- 20-39 = 44%
- 40-59 = 34%
- 60+ = 21%

Area Median Income (AMI)

- Less than 30% of AMI = 55% (18% reported that they had no income at all)
- 30% to 49% of AMI = 27%
- 50% to 79% of AMI = 14%
- 80% + of AMI = 4%

Legal Services for Rural Iowans since October 1, 2024

During the period October 1, 2024 to October 13, 2025, Iowa Legal Aid helped 5,334 rural Iowans. Our work benefitted 13,369 residents and family members, including 5,568 children. We secured \$5,193,215 in financial benefits for these clients. Ninety-nine percent of rural cases had favorable outcomes that helped clients achieve their goals.

Cases

- Family Stability: Thirty-seven percent of our rural cases involved family issues, and almost all of these cases involved domestic violence.
- Housing: Thirty-five percent of rural cases were for housing issues. Our legal team worked with residents on 1,278 eviction cases, helping prevent immediate homelessness for 2,895 residents and family members, including 904 children.
- Income Stability: Protecting or increasing income accounted for 21% of our cases.
- Miscellaneous: Seven percent of our clients' cases were for miscellaneous issues.

Demographics

Our rural clients were:

- 74% female, 26% male
- 37% people with disabilities
- 86% White; 6% Black; 3% more than one race; 3% other; 1% Asian; 1% Native American
- 8% Hispanic.

Ages

- 0-19 = 1%
- 20-39 = 43%
- 40-59 = 33%
- 60+ = 23%

Area Median Income (AMI)

- Less than 30% of AMI = 57% (18% reported that they had no income at all)
- 30% to 49% of AMI = 26%
- 50% to 79% of AMI = 13%
- 80% + of AMI = 4%

Success Story:

When “Kevin” contacted Iowa Legal Aid, he was concerned for his teenage son, “Alex.” During a visit, Alex confided to Kevin that he did not want to return to his mother’s home, revealing that he had endured emotional and physical abuse there. Kevin turned to Iowa Legal Aid for help securing his son’s safety.

An Iowa Legal Aid attorney guided Kevin through the process of filing for sole custody, to ensure that Alex would not have to return to an unsafe environment. Serving Alex’s mother, “Ellie,” with court papers took significant time and effort. Ellie attended the court hearing and agreed to give Kevin full custody, dismissing her son as “nothing but trouble.”

The court’s order granted Kevin sole custody, allowing Alex to remain in a home where he is safe, supported, and loved.