

Civil Legal Aid as Agent for Efficient Government

Civil legal aid addresses inequity and injustice issues statewide for Wisconsin residents. But it is also an effective tool and cost-saving measure for government agencies wrestling with unprecedented demand. The following chart demonstrates this dynamic relationship and impact on government operations. Note that because legal aid is flexible, answering needs as they arise, this list of current and possible roles is necessarily incomplete.

Agency	Legal aid role	Related objectives/activities and goals listed in State of Wisconsin Executive Budget for 2019-21
ADMINISTRATION	<p>Legal aid attorneys already help individuals fill out initial requests for government assistance programs more effectively, reducing the need for hearings and related administrative and personnel costs. They also help applicants to resolve questions when they arise, ensuring that the programs are meeting people's needs as intended.</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already help renters, landlords, homeowners, and mortgage-lenders find solutions to problems which, without such assistance, would lead to eviction or foreclosure, threatening not only a person's/household's housing stability but often that of entire neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Goal: Ensure the timely and effective processing of hearing requests and the completion of administrative actions.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Ensure that FoodShare and Medical Assistance hearing requests will be processed timely and administrative actions are completed.</p> <p>Goal: Increase accessibility and availability of housing and supportive assistance to homeless persons.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Provide funds to assist homeless and at-risk households.</p>
AGRICULTURE, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION	<p>Legal aid attorneys already provide consumer and bankruptcy legal services to ensure unfair business practices do not impede justice for all.</p> <p>They could also alert DATCP to trends and issues in this field on topics including statewide shifts in student debt, upticks in auto and title loan issues, and spikes in bankruptcy filings.</p>	<p>Goal: Ensure fair business practices for buyers and sellers and safe products, including food, for consumers and the environment by establishing and enforcing legal standards, by mediating disputes between consumers and businesses, and by providing consumer education and information to Wisconsin citizens.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Return to consumers and government money gained through unfair business practices.</p>
BOARD FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES	<p>Legal aid attorneys already work to prevent unlawful discrimination against people with disabilities, as well as to remove barriers to employment for individuals in a variety of situations.</p>	<p>Goal: More people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) will be included in their communities.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: By September 30, 2021, 50 percent more people with I/DD will be working in integrated employment of their choice at a competitive wage.</p>

		<p>Objective/Activity: By September 30, 2021, 25 percent more people with I/DD will make choices about their everyday lives.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: By September 30, 2021, 25 percent more people with I/DD will reliably be able to get where they need to go each day.</p>
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE	<p>Legal aid attorneys already represent individuals as guardians of the person and estate to ensure that vulnerable populations do not get taken advantage of by unscrupulous actors or “warehoused” in large institutions.</p>	<p>Goal: To protect the rights and promote empowerment, through systems change and self-advocacy, of persons age 60 and older who are recipients of facility-based, managed long-term care or self-directed supports services.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Educate and empower residents, tenants, members, participants and others regarding rights, ombudsman function and provider responsibilities.</p>
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	<p>Legal aid attorneys already represent children as court-appointed guardians ad litem—reducing risk factors by obtaining custody, child support, and family arrangements that maximize safety and well-being.</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already work with people to reduce barriers to employment.</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already work with people to obtain restraining orders to ensure safety of children and families.</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already help domestic violence survivors to protect themselves from revictimization by facilitating their financial independence (through activities including reducing barriers to employment, job training, or transportation; overcoming illegal sales contracts and resolving other consumer law problems and; resolving housing issues; assisting in accessing public benefit programs; or resolving a tax issue).</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already work with families to ensure that children who have been traumatized by either witnessing or surviving violence can access appropriate public education services related to trauma.</p>	<p>Goal: Achieve permanency for children in out-of-home care.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of children who transition from an out-of-home care placement within 12 months to a permanent family setting.</p> <p>Goal: Reduce the revictimization of children.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of children with a substantiated report of maltreatment who are not revictimized within 12 months of substantiation.</p> <p>Goal: Participants in the department's employment programs obtain employment.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of individuals served by the department's employment programs who started a job in the past 12 months.</p> <p>Goal: Engage Wisconsin Works (W-2) participants in employment activities.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of participants receiving a cash grant under the W-2 employment program who are engaged full-</p>

		<p>time in federally qualifying activities such as work experience, job search, and education and training.</p> <p>Goal: Establish child support court orders.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of child support cases with a court order established.</p> <p>Goal: Increase the payment of current child support.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of child support paid in the month that it is due.</p>
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES	<p>Legal aid attorneys already work with people to reduce barriers to employment.</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already help individuals fill out initial requests for government assistance programs more effectively, making government processing more straightforward and reducing the time and personnel costs required to assist in submissions and re-filings. They also help applicants to resolve questions when they arise, ensuring that programs are meeting people's needs as intended.</p>	<p>Goal: Assist participants in the FoodShare Employment and Training Program (FSET) to gain employment.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Sustain the number of FSET participants that all 11 regions report gaining employment during the reporting period.</p> <p>Goal: Sustain the timely processing of applications for Medicaid and FoodShare benefits.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Process applications for Medicaid and FoodShare benefits within 30 days.</p>
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE	<p>Legal aid attorneys already help hospitals and clients to obtain coverage when due in complex situations.</p> <p>They could alert the OCI to trends and issues in the field.</p>	<p>Goal: Proactively address the root causes of problems in the insurance marketplace through effective regulation, with an emphasis on early detection and prevention.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Aggressively conduct all regulatory core mission functions including information collection, analysis, licensing and adjudication; refine and improve early warning systems in financial and market regulation; train staff to facilitate intra-agency communication and early identification of regulatory issues; and encourage external interaction and feedback.</p>
JUDICIAL COUNCIL	<p>Advocacy for clients makes judicial proceedings more fair and efficient, including reduction of issues and resolution of disputes that lighten court dockets and diminish court personnel demands.</p>	<p>Goal: Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Wisconsin court system.</p>

<p>LABOR AND INDUSTRY REVIEW COMMISSION</p>	<p>Advocacy for clients makes judicial proceedings more fair and efficient.</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already review and handle unemployment, worker's compensation, public benefits, and equal rights program with frequency and up through the appeals process, ultimately reducing frivolous claims and related demands on state agency staff.</p>	<p>Goal: Preserve the integrity of the unemployment insurance, worker's compensation and equal rights programs in the state by providing prompt, efficient and fair resolution of appeals.</p>
<p>PUBLIC INSTRUCTION</p>	<p>Legal aid already helps economically disadvantaged students to achieve more by helping families solve problems that make it difficult to provide a stable living situation—barriers related to housing, employment, health insurance, and access to public benefits.</p> <p>Legal attorneys already work to remove barriers to appropriate public education for children (stabilizing children in their educational setting, accessing special educational services related to trauma).</p> <p>Legal aid helps students and families of color in that clients are disproportionately people of color because of historic systemic disparities.</p> <p>Some legal aid organizations in Wisconsin have begun to offer community lawyering, a way of providing residents of communities of color with easier access to attorneys in order to address any barrier or injustice at hand—thus aiming to move entire neighborhoods toward stability and to improve education and other outcomes for all residents.</p>	
<p>WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM</p>	<p>Legal aid attorneys already help technical college students and their families around Wisconsin (via clinics in partnership with the MATC system for example) to address major financial and life issues, making it easier to focus on such positive goals as education.</p>	<p>Goal: Expand the pool of skilled workers in the state's labor force.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase the number of minority students who graduate.</p>

	<p>Increasing legal aid will help families facing economic disadvantage to stabilize, making it easier for their students to attend postsecondary education.</p> <p>Legal aid clients are disproportionately people of color because of historic systemic disparities.</p> <p>Some legal aid organizations in Wisconsin have begun to offer community lawyering, a way of providing residents of communities of color with easier access to attorneys in order to address any barrier or injustice at hand—thus aiming to move entire neighborhoods toward stability and to improve education, and labor force, and other outcomes for all residents.</p>	
<p>UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM</p>	<p>Legal aid attorneys already help families around Wisconsin to address major financial and life issues, making it easier to focus on such positive goals as education.</p> <p>Increasing legal aid will help families facing economic disadvantage to stabilize, making it easier for their students to attend postsecondary education.</p>	<p>Goal: Meet or exceed the current plans to increase undergraduate degrees conferred (associate and bachelor's).</p>
<p>VETERANS AFFAIRS</p>	<p>Legal aid attorneys already help veterans to navigate a complex system in order to secure their federal benefits.</p>	<p>Goal: Assist Wisconsin veterans and eligible family members in accessing federal veterans entitlements and other federal benefits and programs through outreach, direct services, assistance in transportation to federal Veterans Affairs medical appointments and intergovernmental/multilateral partnerships.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Maximize the receipt of federal veterans entitlements and other federal benefits and services for Wisconsin veterans and their eligible dependents.</p>
<p>WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION</p>	<p>Legal aid attorneys already provide technical assistance that helps entrepreneurs, and aspiring entrepreneurs, who are currently facing poverty to build their dreams and provide pro bono luxury commodity representation through partnerships with large firms to ensure new</p>	<p>Goal: Provide business assistance services to drive start-up, expansion or relocation to Wisconsin.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Deliver technical and financial business assistance services directly to Wisconsin businesses with in-house staff or through contracted partners.</p>

	business success as well as community redevelopment in impoverished neighborhoods.	Objective/Activity: Provide technical support or financial investment for projects that advance target sectors or improve the state's economic development capabilities.
WISCONSIN HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	Legal aid attorneys already assist clients in traversing complicated HUD requirements to obtain subsidized housing and appeal and review of disputed claims.	<p>Goal: Continue to grow as a trusted provider of innovative single-family home loan products and services to expand affordable housing options.</p> <p>Goal: Increase and preserve the supply of multifamily housing for low- and moderate-income families, seniors, and veterans; connect affordable housing with services, including those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless; encourage housing development in areas of economic opportunity and rural locations; and coordinate housing development with community development plans.</p>
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	<p>Legal aid attorneys already assist people to remove barriers to employment.</p> <p>Legal aid attorneys already help clients to more successfully file paperwork for unemployment insurance and other public benefits, reducing pressures on statewide emergency programs through this direct impact as well as its positive repercussions on housing security.</p>	<p>Goal: Provide job applicants with access to available jobs in Wisconsin.</p> <p>Objective/Activity: Increase employers' access to available labor pools and job seekers' access to available jobs by increasing the number of job orders posted on www.JobCenterofWisconsin.com.</p>