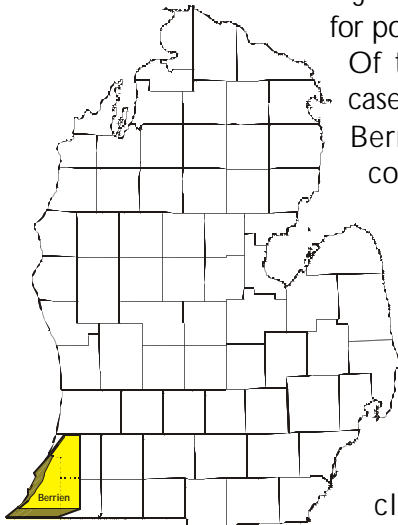


BERRIEN COUNTY LEGAL SERVICES BUREAU, INC.

Office Locations: Niles and St. Joseph

BCLS Service Area: Berrien County; Senior citizens in Cass and Van Buren Counties

Service Population: 30,241 individuals living at or below 125% of the poverty level



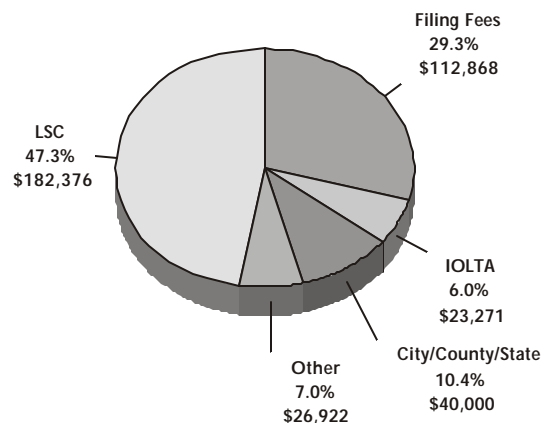
During 2000, BCLS closed 1,691 cases for poor people in Berrien County. Of the cases closed, 454 were cases for senior citizens living in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. More than 70 cases involved representation of parents in child protective proceedings. Overall, BCLS provided services in a wide variety of civil matters including public benefits, family matters, and landlord-tenant cases. Most client intake was through BCLS's Helpline, which provides

Grandparents in Missouri sought to care for a grandchild whose parents had been charged with neglect and abuse. The father snatched the child from the grandparents' home and fled to his mother's house in Berrien County, Michigan. Although the grandparents had been granted guardianship, they had been unsuccessful in getting help from the police. BCLS helped them get an order signed by a Berrien County judge for the return of the boy. By the end of the day, the child was on his way home with his grandparents.

immediate eligibility screening, case intake, and legal advice by telephone. Many of BCLS's clients had problems related to disability and frequently needed assistance with multiple problems, including housing, education, income, and access to medical care. In April, BCLS began offering monthly self-help divorce clinics alternating between the Niles and St. Joseph offices. More than 60 people attended these clinics. Helpline attorneys often assisted these people as they proceeded through the court process by answering questions about issues such as court practices.

An elderly couple began receiving bills from the phone company for a phone number that was not theirs. After contact with the phone company, BCLS attorneys discovered that someone had illegally obtained phone service at another address using the woman's Social Security number and name. After negotiations, a BCLS attorney convinced the company that this was a case of fraud and identity theft and had the charges removed from the account.

BCLS Sources of Funding for 2000: \$ 385,437



BERRIEN COUNTY LEGAL SERVICES BUREAU, INC.

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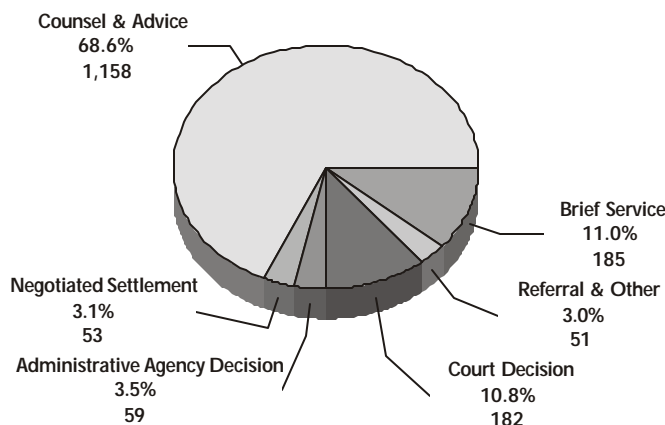
Community Outreach and Collaboration. BCLS worked to improve understanding of the problems and concerns of low-income people through continuing involvement with the courts, the bar, and other agencies serving the client community, such as the Senior Triad, the Safe Shelter, and others. Safe and affordable housing was a major concern in Benton Harbor and Niles, and BCLS has placed a high priority on issues concerning eviction from subsidized housing and mobile homes. BCLS has worked with groups in both communities focusing on improving existing housing and creating new home ownership opportunities for low-income people. A staff attorney continued her work with elementary school children in Benton Harbor through the Lawyer-Teacher Partner program initiated by the Center for Civic Education and Law. She participated regularly in classroom activities to teach basic legal concepts and conflict resolution skills. Presentations were also made to organizations such as Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Alzheimer and stroke victim support groups, and the Women's Roundtable.

Client Age	
18 & Under	11
19-59	1,223
60 & Over	454
Groups	0
Total	1,688

Pro Bono Support. More than 20 percent of the county's active bar participated in BCLS's efforts to involve private attorneys in assisting low-income people and senior citizens. In 2000, private attorneys handled cases ranging from trusts to divorces involving domestic violence. Several attorneys volunteered to work on BCLS's hotline for half a day, providing legal counseling over the telephone to eligible callers. BCLS also was able to refer private attorneys willing to give free legal seminars on relevant topics to various community organizations.

Client Ethnicity	
White	914
Black	720
Hispanic	14
Native American	10
Asian	2
Other	28
Total	1,688

BCLS Types of Service in 2000



BCLS Cases Closed in 2000: 1,688

