



W E G I V E T H E M A

VOICE



SEOLS
Southeastern Ohio Legal Services

2015 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

A VOICE FOR THOSE IN NEED

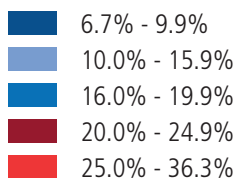
Southeastern Ohio Legal Services (SEOLS) gives a legal voice to thousands of low-income individuals in a 30-county service area, with a mission of ensuring equal access to justice for our clients through advocacy, education and empowerment.

SEOLS' clients are among Ohio's most vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens. Ohioans who earn less than 125% of the federal poverty level financially qualify for SEOLS services. Nine of the 13 Ohio counties with the highest poverty rates in the state are served by SEOLS.

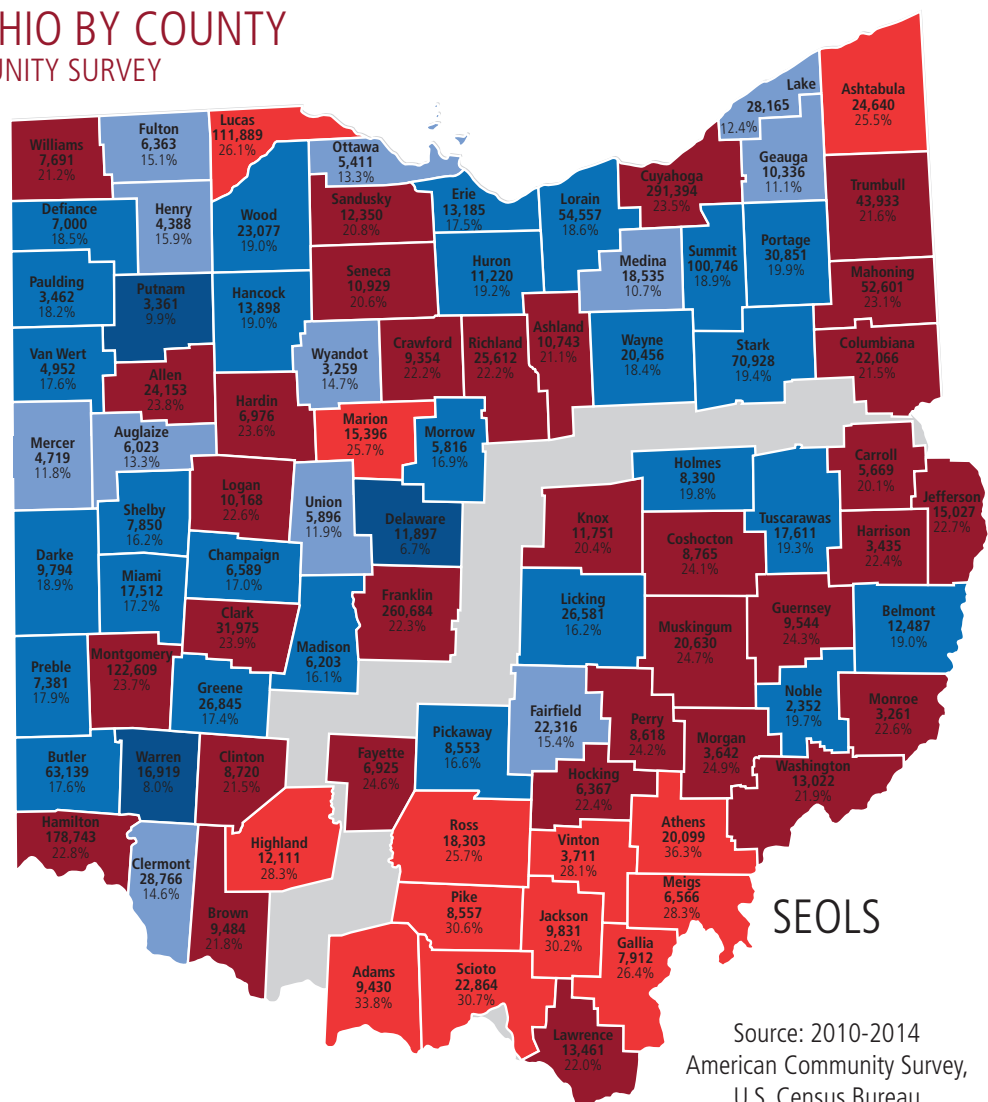
125% POVERTY IN OHIO BY COUNTY 2010-2014 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

STATEWIDE POVERTY
2,299,400
20.5%

Percentage of
County Population
in Poverty

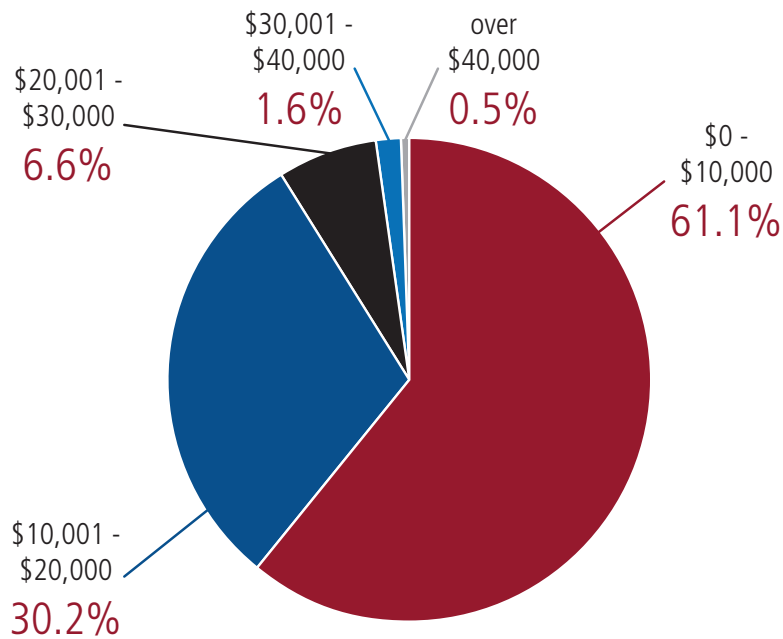


Persons in Family/ Household	125% Poverty Guideline
1	\$14,713
2	\$19,913
3	\$25,113
4	\$30,313
5	\$35,513
6	\$40,713



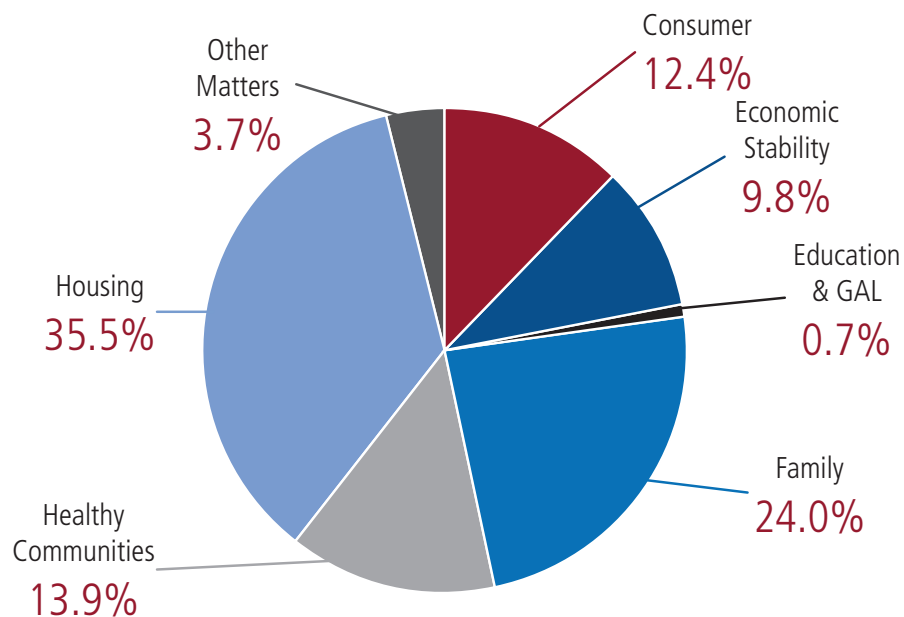
Source: 2010-2014
American Community Survey,
U.S. Census Bureau

SEOLS CLIENTS' HOUSEHOLD INCOME - 2014



INDIVIDUAL CASE SERVICES JANUARY - DECEMBER 2014

SEOLS helps families stabilize housing; access critical healthcare and benefits; and, obtain and preserve financial stability. SEOLS also ensures families are safe and secure and children receive the supports they need to achieve success and stay in school.



ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

SEOLS advocates on behalf of clients by providing legal representation. SEOLS also collaborates with community partners to protect clients' livelihoods, health, homes and families.

SEOLS partners with community health care providers to help improve infant mortality and health outcomes.



REDUCING INFANT MORTALITY

Between 2004 and 2013, ten counties served by SEOLS experienced the highest infant mortality rates in Ohio. Through a medical-legal partnership with the Pathways Program, SEOLS addresses legal needs and thereby helps improve the health of low-income, at-risk pregnant women. SEOLS attorneys work with home healthcare workers to spot and resolve legal problems that negatively impact the health of women and infants, giving mothers a chance for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

ENSURING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

The medical-legal partnership between SEOLS and the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine addresses and removes barriers to health care by helping clients better understand their legal rights to health care benefits; ensuring they have access to health care after being denied services and benefits; and, enforcing their rights to safe and healthy housing. Health outcomes for patients in Southeast Ohio have improved as a result of the advocacy provided by this medical-legal partnership.



EXPANDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

PRO BONO

SEOLS, in partnership with local bar associations, courts, churches, and agencies, has established 16 pro bono clinics located throughout the 30 counties it serves. At the clinics, low-income individuals get information and advice from local private attorneys and, if needed, help in identifying and completing the proper forms to file at court.

SEOLS also works with the Columbus Bar Association and the Legal Aid Society of Columbus to make the pro bono services of private attorneys and law students in Columbus available and accessible for residents of the Southeastern Ohio counties served by SEOLS.

COURT HELP DAYS

SEOLS works with the juvenile courts in Pike and Pickaway counties and the Family Court in Fairfield County to establish a day each month when low-income individuals can come to the court to meet with a SEOLS attorney to get legal advice, and, if appropriate, help identifying and filling out court forms.

SELF-HELP KIOSKS

SEOLS will soon install self-help kiosks in Southeast Ohio. First-of-their-kind in Southeast Ohio, the kiosks feature a computer terminal and printer where low-income individuals can access legal information, easy-to-follow instructions, and domestic court forms to get the help they need to resolve their legal problems.

CHANGING LIVES

SEOLS gives clients a legal voice, enabling them to resolve their legal problems and empowering them to move up and out of poverty.



Sara,* a working mother, and her family struggled financially and were often homeless, living out of their car. The family finally moved to an affordable apartment, but Sara could not obtain electric service due to a past electricity bill that had gone unpaid while her husband was battling cancer. The landlord threatened to evict the family if Sara could not obtain and pay for electricity. In danger of being homeless again, she contacted SEOLS for help. SEOLS, working with the landlord, the utility company, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), the Department of Job and Family Services (DJFS), and local charities, helped Sara get her family's electricity turned on, stopped the eviction, and worked out an affordable payment plan for the past electricity bill. That night Sara heard her children yelling, "Mommy, Mommy, our electricity is on. It's really on." Sara cried because she was so relieved that she and her family had electricity and were able to keep their safe and stable home.

"I feel like all the weight I [had] been carrying [has lifted] off my shoulders." – Sara

In 2014, 5,505 children, adults, and seniors sought help from SEOLS for safe and stable housing.



Micah, a 4-year-old preschool student, has Type 1 diabetes. When Micah's preschool refused to administer the several injections he needed a day in order to manage his condition, Micah's mom reached out to SEOLS for help. She was stressed and worried that Micah would not receive the medical attention he needed. SEOLS advocated for Micah's medical needs and worked with the preschool to create a plan that would help Micah manage his diabetes. Micah is now doing well in preschool and his mom has peace of mind that her son is healthy and safe at school.

In 2014, SEOLS maintained and supported 82 children in school.



Rhonda's* husband repeatedly threatened and abused her. One day he choked Rhonda, punched her in the face, and threw her to the ground. Their young son was frightened. Fearful for her life, Rhonda contacted SEOLS for help. SEOLS helped Rhonda obtain a Civil Protection Order, get a divorce, custody of her son, and child support to be paid by her violent ex-husband. Rhonda and her son now live free from threats and abuse.

"I would not have made it through such a hard time without such caring and supportive people. There are so many people that are abused and feel there is no way out. I believe with places like SEOLS, it gives people hope that there is a better life." – Rhonda

In 2014, SEOLS helped 1,164 children, adults, and seniors to escape domestic abuse.

* Names and photos have been changed to protect client privacy.

BUILDING ON A FOUNDATION OF QUALITY AND INNOVATION

Despite a funding decrease of 50%, a staffing decrease of more than 40%, and the closing of three offices in the SEOLS service area over the last 5 years, SEOLS continues to provide high-quality civil legal aid to more than 15,000 economically disadvantaged families, senior citizens, veterans and persons with disabilities. After a weeklong performance evaluation, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) reported that SEOLS “has created a culture of high quality advocacy” and that its casework reflected “innovative and aggressive representation, often resulting in major benefits to its client population.” SEOLS is committed to building on this foundation to expand its impact, and will:

- 1.** Continue to collaborate and coordinate services with other community organizations, including Muskingum Valley Health Centers, Paint Valley ADAMH Board, Fairfield County Domestic Relations Court, Integrating Professionals for Appalachian Children, Licking County Coalition for Housing, and Volunteers of America.
- 2.** Continue to look for innovative ways to increase and diversify funding, building on successful models that provide the resources needed to prevent foreclosures, assist domestic violence victims and veterans, provide fair housing education and outreach, give children and their families a legal voice in juvenile courts, and protect senior citizens from abuse and neglect.
- 3.** Continue to find new ways to connect our clients to pro bono help from volunteer attorneys and non-attorneys in our communities, and from law firms and law schools in Franklin County.
- 4.** Continue to creatively use technology to improve overall operating efficiency, and to provide more ways to help our clients.

Fluctuations in state and federal funding are a fact of life. What has not fluctuated since SEOLS opened its first offices in 1977 is our commitment to the mission: To provide the highest quality legal services to our clients, and to search out the patterns, causes, and solutions for the repetitive and fundamental problems affecting our client community. On behalf of the Board, the staff, and our clients, we want to acknowledge with heartfelt thanks the many generous individuals, law firms, solo practitioners, judges, agencies, and other community partners who have helped make our work possible.

With your continued support, we will have the resources we need to be the legal voice for families, senior citizens, veterans, children and persons with disabilities who are facing life-changing legal problems.

Thank you very much.

For more information about Southeastern Ohio Legal Services, please visit our website: www.seols.org

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