

Legal Needs Assessment Results Are Here

We are excited to inform you that the findings from the community legal needs assessment are now available.

You can access the full report [here](#).

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who participated. Your input was invaluable. Your insights and feedback were instrumental in helping us understand the pressing legal issues faced by low-income residents in our community. We could not have done it without you.

To be exact. 421 of you.



421

Total
Participants



250

Community Member
Survey Responses



89

Community
Partners



35

Legal Providers



35

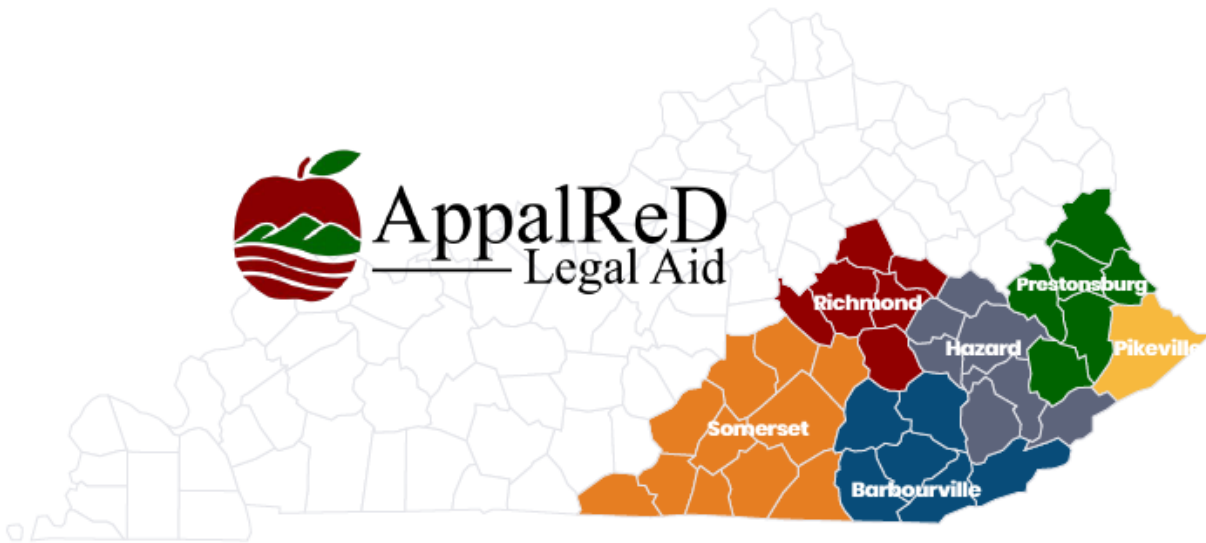
Focus Group
Participants



12

In-depth
Interviews

AppalReD Legal Aid Service Area



AppalReD Legal Aid serves 37 counties throughout eastern and south-central Kentucky. Approximately, 200,000 low-income people qualify for our services. It is no surprise that our region is one of the poorest in the nation.

Specifically,

- 35 out of 37 counties in AppalReD's service region have lower median income than the state average median income.
- 25 out of 37 counties in AppalReD's service region have higher ALICE ((Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) thresholds than the rest of the state. These people are often considered the "working poor." The challenges faced by the working poor include low wages, lack of access to benefits and social services, limited education and training opportunities, poverty, and inequality.
- 19 out of 37 counties are considered highly vulnerable according to CDC Social Vulnerability Index.

ThredPartners found that there is a growing gap between Federal Poverty Line and Asset Limited income due to inflation and cost of living. More people need our services but find themselves NOT financially eligible but also unable to afford an attorney.

Top Legal Issues and Barriers

Top Legal Needs

1. Housing
2. Consumer or Finance
3. Children or Custody
4. Employment
5. Public Benefits

Why People Don't Contact a Lawyer

1. Worried about cost
2. Did not know where to look
3. Did not think it was a legal issue

Legal Education Topics

1. Family Law
2. Housing Law
3. Public Benefits
4. Civil Rights

Obstacles to Obtaining Legal Services

- Do not want to reveal personal information
- Do not realize a lawyer could help
- Do not trust lawyers or the legal system
- No one to watch kids
- Can't take time off work
- Don't provide the kinds of services they need
- Can't pay the fees or expenses
- In crisis and have too many other things to think about

Key Takeaways

After analyzing Census Data, other demographic information, and survey, focus group and interview data, here are some key takeaways.

Housing Crisis: The housing situation has significantly worsened. The increased cost of housing, lower incomes, and the devastating 2022 floods have left many without homes. Some areas are no longer habitable, reducing the availability of affordable housing.

Family Unit Deterioration: The stress of poverty has increased mental health issues and substance abuse, leading to broken families. Over 50,000 grandparents are now raising their grandchildren, indicating a significant social shift.

Employment and Infrastructure Decline: The loss of coal mining and manufacturing jobs has led to a lack of reliable employment and essential services. Many are now dependent on low-wage, part-time jobs without benefits, making it difficult to meet basic needs.

Drug Crisis: The opioid epidemic has resulted in increased addiction, overdose deaths, and incarceration rates (particularly for women). Many individuals are unaware that their issues could be addressed legally, and social services are struggling to meet the demand for assistance.

Legal Education Needs: Community partners identified a need for more legal education Topics such as Family Law, Housing, Public Benefits, and Civil Rights were highlighted as areas where AppalReD could make a significant impact.

Awareness of Free Legal Aid: A significant portion of respondents were unaware of AppalReD and other free legal services. Increasing awareness and outreach is crucial to ensure equitable access to legal assistance.

Disparities Among Minorities: Minority communities face similar issues as white residents but have distinct challenges. Employment related legal issues were a concern. Significantly, while the population of eastern Kentucky has declined by five percent, populations of color have grown (Black residents by 4%, Asian residents by 26%, and Hispanic residents by 37%).

Distrust in the Legal System: Many community partners and respondents indicated distrust in the legal system, believing it favors individuals based on income or social status. Building trust through increased community engagement and awareness is essential.

What's Next?

Join us on July 11 at 11 am for a conversation with our Executive Director and Advocacy Director on results from the legal needs assessment. [Save this link](#) to log in on Zoom.

LEGAL NEEDS RESULTS

Join Angeleigh Dorsey, Executive Director, and Advocacy Director, Evan Smith, as they share the results from the community legal needs assessment, which had nearly 500 participants!

- Top Legal Needs
- Barriers to Access
- Key Takeaways

AppalReD will be using the findings to launch strategic planning, determining the goals, priorities, and resource allocation for the next five years.

We want to hear from you!



JULY 11, 2024
AT 11 AM



Zoom link:
bit.ly/legalneedsmeeting



**Angeleigh
Dorsey**



Evan Smith

The comprehensive report available here details the specific legal needs identified and will be crucial in guiding our collaborative efforts to better serve our community.

We will use the information from the assessment as we launch strategic planning in the coming weeks. We will set goals and priorities for the next five years.

We hope the legal needs assessment findings spark ideas for collaboration and outreach. Please reach out to AngieD@ardfky.org with ideas, thoughts, and feedback.

Last updated on February 08, 2026.

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