

White House Budget Proposes Elimination of Legal Services Corporation, Stripping Support from Kentucky Families Facing Natural Disasters, Domestic Violence, and More

Prestonsburg, Kentucky—The White House’s proposed federal budget for Fiscal Year 2026 includes a recommendation to eliminate the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), the primary funder of civil legal aid across the country.

If enacted, the proposal would gut funding for organizations like AppalReD Legal Aid, which serves low-income residents throughout Appalachian Kentucky. AppalReD Legal Aid is the only provider of free civil legal services for low-income people across 37 counties in Eastern and South-Central Kentucky. With support from LSC, AppalReD helps veterans, seniors, domestic violence survivors, families facing eviction or foreclosure, and others navigating life-altering legal challenges.

The proposed budget would provide LSC with just \$21 million for close-out costs—a drastic departure from the \$560 million it received in FY 2025 under a continuing resolution.

“For more than 50 years, LSC has helped ensure that people who can’t afford an attorney still have access to justice when their home, safety, or livelihood is on the line,” said Angeleigh Dorsey, Executive Director of AppalReD Legal Aid. “If this proposal goes through, the people of Appalachian Kentucky will pay the price. Without LSC funding, many of our offices could close, and thousands of Eastern Kentuckians would be left without any legal help when facing evictions, domestic violence, natural disaster, consumer scams, or the loss of critical income or healthcare.”

LSC currently supports 130 legal aid organizations nationwide, helping more than five million low-income Americans annually, including over a million children and nearly 45,000 veterans.

In Kentucky, LSC funding supports a network of four legal aid programs working to level the playing field in court for those who cannot afford a lawyer. These cuts would impact nearly a million Kentuckians. In Kentucky, 21.6 percent of Kentuckians qualify for legal aid, and in AppalReD Legal Aid's service region 1 in 3 residents qualify. Collectively, in 2024 Kentucky's legal aids served 64,042 people, including:

- 1,401 veterans
- 7,313 older Americans
- 6,266 domestic violence survivors.

"This proposed budget is disheartening. Legal aid delivers proven results, with [a \\$7 return for every \\$1 invested](#). Yet even in a normal year, we're forced to turn away people in crisis. Since Valentine's Day, our region has been hit by three catastrophic natural disasters. The need for legal help is urgent, and this is the worst possible time to cut support for survivors trying to rebuild their lives. Why would you ever kick someone when they're down, when you can offer them a proven hand up?" Angeleigh Dorsey added.

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