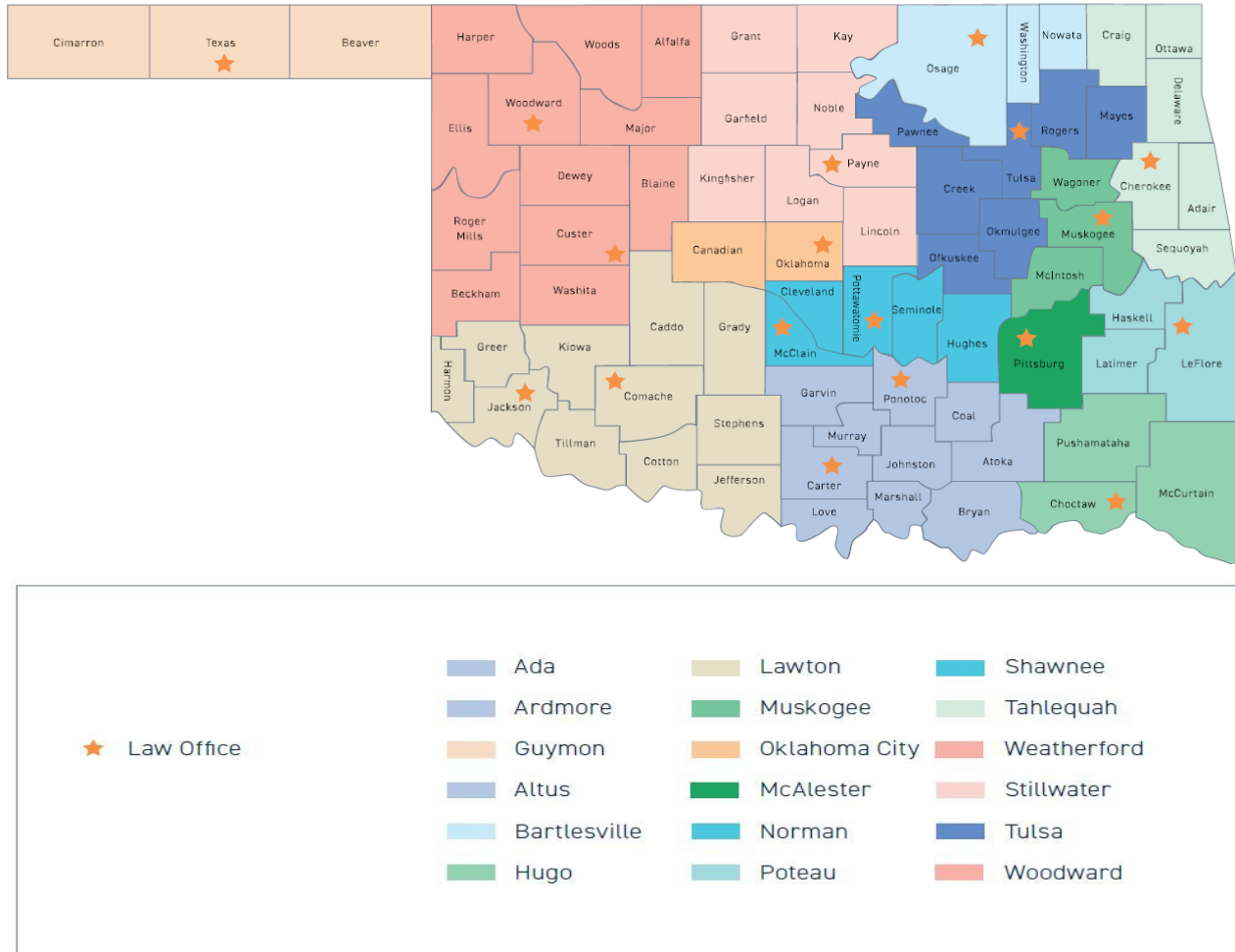


## 2021 Legal Aid Fact Sheet

Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma (LASO) is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that provides free civil legal assistance to eligible low-income individuals, their families, and the elderly. This service is provided through LASO's 18 law offices, strategically located throughout the state to serve clients in all 77 Oklahoma counties. These fully-staffed offices are in Ada, Altus, Ardmore, Bartlesville, Guymon, Hugo, Lawton, McAlester, Muskogee, Nor-



man, Oklahoma City, Poteau, Shawnee, Stillwater, Tahlequah, Tulsa, Weatherford and Woodward. LASO's administrative office is in Oklahoma City.

LASO's work is civil in nature. LASO is prohibited from entering class action lawsuits as well as from taking fee-generating cases. LASO typically passes those cases to the private bar when clients seek our help. Family law issues and assisting survivors of Domestic Violence comprise a great deal of LASO's work. LASO also represents the elderly seeking social security, or in helping the elderly resolve the issues of guardianship. LASO helps individuals faced with losing their housing through evictions or mortgage foreclosures, and with cases involving Medicare, Medicaid, and other health care problems. LASO also maintains a Disaster Legal Services Unit wherein attorneys assist low-income persons impacted by Oklahoma's frequent natural disasters such as tornadoes, wildfires, floods, and ice storms.

To have been eligible for legal assistance in 2021, a client must be living at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. In 2021, poverty level was an income of \$25,760 or less for an individual, \$34,840 for a family of 2, and \$53,000 for a family of 4. In 2021, 570,089 Oklahomans (14.3%) lived in poverty and qualified for LASO services.

**Due to the impact of COVID-19,  
2021 was by far the busiest year in LASO history  
(surpassing 2020, the second busiest year in LASO history).**

In the days following the advent of COVID-19 in March 2020, thousands of Oklahomans lost their jobs or saw their pay reduced, sending shockwaves through their lives and the economy of the state. Oklahomans who had never previously needed food assistance or unemployment assistance formed long lines at food banks and unemployment offices, and thousands applied for emergency nutritional assistance from the state. As Oklahomans' employment situations became more dire and rents and mortgages went unpaid, a wave of evictions began to sweep the state. Many Oklahomans became ill. The calls to LASO by Oklahomans desperate for help due to being impacted in some way by COVID-19 began within only a few days of the arrival of COVID in Oklahoma and have never stopped. The issues presented were overwhelmingly in the arena of private landlord/tenant problems as evictions began in earnest when thousands of Oklahomans suddenly found themselves unemployed. LASO services saved thousands of Oklahoma families from homelessness and assured receipt of Unemployment Insurance and stimulus funds to avoid food insecurity. Other primary areas of focus were food stamps and consumer issues, such as garnishment and bankruptcy.

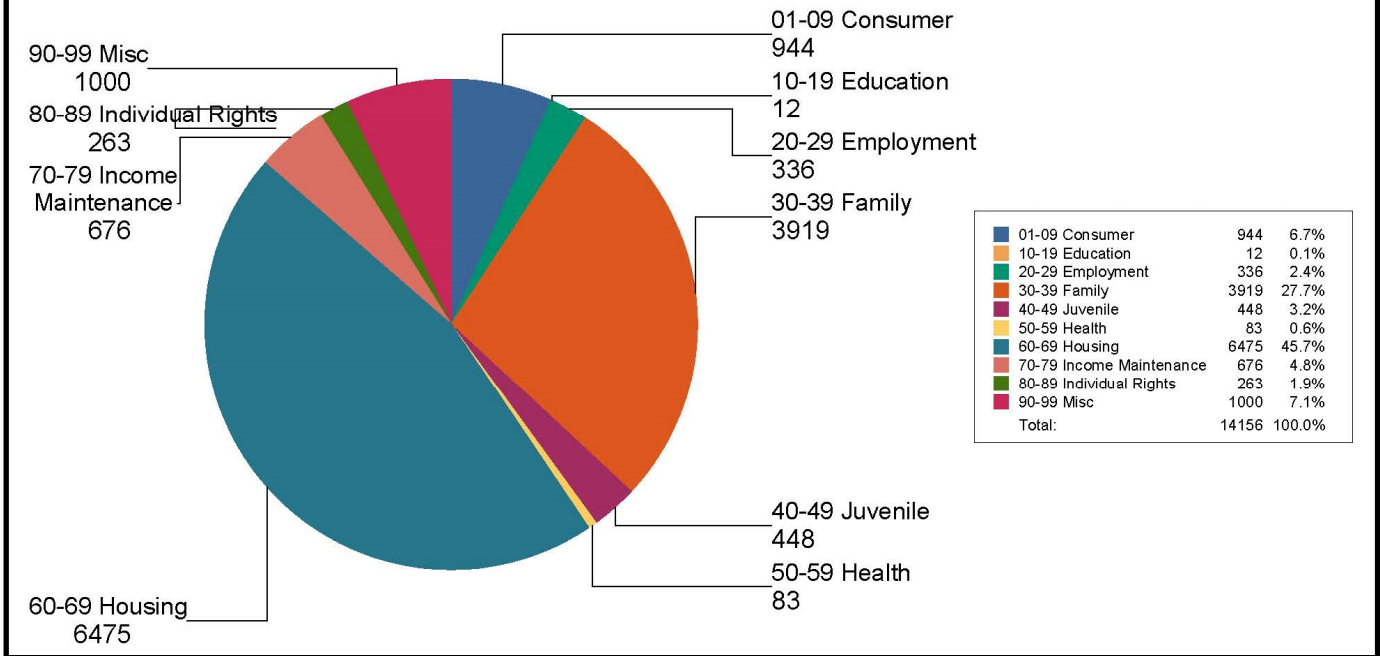
- ◆ Since March 15, 2020, LASO has been presented with almost 9,000 COVID-related civil legal issues.
- ◆ In 2021, the LASO legal staff closed 14,156 cases statewide, a 32% increase over closed cases in 2020. In 2020, LASO legal staff closed 10,713 cases, a 6% increase over 2019.
- ◆ The closed cases in 2021 impacted 34,453 Oklahomans including 14,320 children, 2,761 elderly persons, 3,937 disabled persons, and 964 Veterans.

**The biggest demand for LASO services in 2021 was in the area of housing law, including cases involving eviction.**

- ◆ In 2021, LASO Staff closed 6,475 Housing cases (including Eviction), an increase of 142% over 2020. In 2020, LASO staff closed 2,676 Housing cases, a 90% increase over 2019. Since 2019, LASO's closed Housing cases have increased 361%.
- ◆ In 2021, LASO Staff prevented 3,883 Evictions, a 246% increase over 2020, and an extraordinary increase of 1028% since 2019.
- ◆ In 2021, LASO staff generated \$8,647,123.05 in total monetary benefit/recovery for clients.

# LASO Closed Cases

From 1/1/2021 - 12/31/2021



LASO has a total staff of approximately 275, including over 170 attorneys, but demand for LASO services continues to increase. To help handle the demand for LASO services, hundreds of private Oklahoma attorneys and law school interns volunteer their time and expertise to LASO. Sometimes they teach in LASO's legal clinics, but most often they advise clients and help them fill out legal forms, or they take on simple cases for full representation.

As a non-profit law firm, LASO depends entirely for its support upon competitive grants, contracts, and donations from law firms, foundations, and individuals. LASO is a member agency of over a dozen United Way agencies throughout the state and is a grantee of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation.

The membership of LASO's governing board is determined by the Legal Services Corporation, LASO's primary grantor, and must be comprised of two-thirds attorney representatives from bar associations and other legal associations and one-third representing LASO clients.

**To learn more about LASO, please visit**  
[www.legalaidok.org](http://www.legalaidok.org).

*Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma receives funding through the Legal Services Corporation and we are required to notify all our sources of gifts, including private donors, that we will not engage in advocacy activities prohibited by the LSC Act (42 U.S.C. 2996 et. Seq. or by Public Law 104-134) or LSC Appropriations Riders.*