

# C THE LAWYERS' CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL JUSTICE



## Access to Justice in Oregon

- Oregon's legal services programs have offices in 16 communities statewide (Albany, Bend, Coos Bay, Eugene, Grants Pass, Hillsboro, Klamath Falls, Medford, Newport, Ontario, Oregon City, Pendleton, Portland, Roseburg, Salem and Woodburn). Statewide programs include the Native American Program, the Farmworker Project, and the Community Development Law Center.
- Last year alone, legal services programs directly served over 20,000 low-income clients. Thousands more were helped through *pro se* materials, self-help programs and *pro bono* assistance.
- Over 600,000 low-income and elderly Oregonians qualify for the services of Oregon's 91 legal aid attorneys; that's one attorney for every 6,600 persons. For the general population there is one attorney for every 340 persons.
- According to the Oregon Legal Needs Study completed in 2000, more than 80% of the legal needs of low to moderate income Oregonians are going unserved each year. A recent survey completed by Legal Aid Services of Oregon shows that this unmet need has only increased in the last five years.
- Legal services representation is limited to high-priority needs: food, shelter, medical care, income maintenance and physical safety. About 40% of the cases are family law cases, usually helping the victims of domestic violence to obtain and enforce restraining orders and create a stable home environment for their children. Recent studies have shown that access to legal services is essential in the process of ending domestic abuse.
- A statewide legal needs study\* found that 70% of respondents who were represented by a legal aid attorney had a favorable view of the legal system, even when the issue was not resolved in their favor. Of respondents who did not have access to legal counsel, 75% had an unfavorable view of the legal system.

*"If people don't have access to the justice system, they have no reason to respect it. And for some people, access can be life saving."*

-Charlie Williamson

\*2000 Legal Needs Study sponsored by the Oregon State Bar, Oregon Judicial Department and the Office of the Governor.