

Colorado Legal Services opens over 5,000 cases in first half of 2024

Need for legal support to obtain basic necessities prevalent in all parts of Colorado

Aug. 5, 2024 (DENVER) – Colorado Legal Services opened 5,709 cases to provide legal help to low-income Coloradans in the first half of 2024. Colorado Legal Services is Colorado’s statewide legal aid nonprofit.

The top concerns from Coloradans throughout the first half of 2024 were housing (2,505), divorce/family/custody (1,138), and consumer (701) related. Housing matters could include defending against evictions; negotiating rent agreements with landlords to help people stay in their homes; helping tenants learn their rights regarding security deposits and conditions impacting the habitability of their homes; and directing clients to rental assistance and community resources. Divorce, family, and custody matters include representation of domestic violence survivors in divorce, custody, and protection order matters.

In April of this year, identification issues rose to the top three categories of cases opened each month, demonstrating a continued and rising need for legal support for obtaining ID documents. Our ID Project staff help people obtain their driver's license or other identification documents. Most ID Project clients who volunteer demographic information when seeking ID assistance say they are unhoused.

“The need for legal help to obtain basic necessities is widespread and prevalent in all parts of Colorado. In the first half of this year, Colorado communities benefitted from the incredible dedication and work of our attorneys, paralegals, social workers, intake staff and others to help Coloradans stay in their homes, find freedom from unfair debt, and care for their families,” said Matthew Baca, executive director of Colorado Legal Services. “Particularly notable is that while housing, family, and

consumer are typically our top three categories of cases, in April of this year over 100 Coloradans sought help obtaining identification documents, which people need to find housing, obtain jobs, apply for public benefits, and go about much of their daily lives.”

The following is a snapshot of the first half of 2024:

January:

- Total opened cases: 1,027
- Housing: 447; Divorce/Family/Custody: 237; Consumer: 119
- In January alone, Colorado Legal Services opened 1,044 cases. Four hundred and forty-seven of those cases were housing related. Housing instability is a challenge for many Coloradans. According to the [Colorado Coalition for the Homeless](#), 14,439 Coloradans were experiencing homelessness in 2023 – a 39% increase from 2022.

February:

- Total opened cases: 1,044
- Housing: 461; Divorce/Family/Custody: 203; Consumer: 134

March:

- Total opened cases: 904
- Housing: 388; Divorce/Family/Custody: 166; Consumer: 121

April:

- Total opened cases: 989
- Housing: 436; Divorce/Family/Custody: 179; ID Issues: 107

May:

- Total opened cases: 1011
- Housing: 441; Divorce/Family/Custody: 203; Consumer: 112
- In May, Colorado Legal Services opened 1,011 cases. 112 of those cases were consumer related. Consumer matters could include helping people with debt collections, bankruptcy, or garnishment. According to The Bell Policy Center, since 2022, Colorado's total mortgage debt has grown significantly. This growth is likely attributed to the increasing cost of living.

June:

- Total opened cases: 724
- Housing: 332; Divorce/Family/Custody: 150; Consumer: 112

About us

Colorado Legal Services is Colorado's statewide nonprofit legal aid program providing civil legal assistance—which does not include criminal or traffic matters—to low-income individuals and older Coloradans throughout the state. Its 13 offices provide free legal assistance in a broad variety of legal areas, including eviction defense, consumer protection, services to survivors of serious crime and human trafficking, representation for domestic violence survivors, and many others.

Almost 1.4 million Coloradans qualify financially for CLS's services. CLS's current staff of 85 attorneys and 48 paralegals is supplemented by a robust private attorney involvement program. Learn more at www.coloradolegalservices.org.

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Table of Contents

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