



**ALSC**

ACADIANA LEGAL SERVICE CORPORATION  
EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

2022

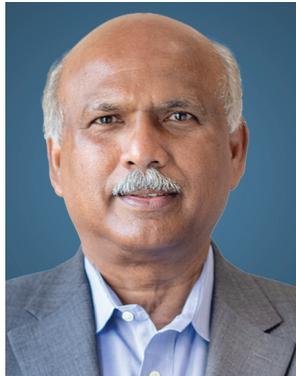
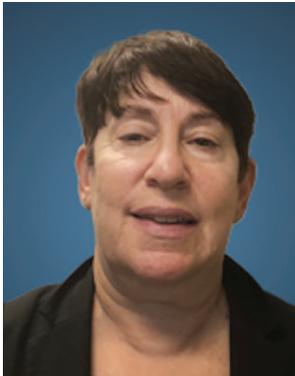
# Annual Report



*Serving 42 parishes in north,  
central and southwest Louisiana!*

MESSAGE FROM

# ALSC LEADERSHIP



Left to right:

Susan K Jones,  
Board President

Sachida Raman,  
Executive Director

Tamiko Chatman,  
Deputy Director

In 2022, Acadiana Legal Service Corporation began a series of important transformations amongst which included Intake and our Case Management System. Sachida Raman, our new Executive Director, is leading us into this exciting phase as we restructure how to be more efficient and effective going forward. We take great pride in officially adopting “Acadiana Legal Service Corporation” as our unified name. The purpose of the name change is to cultivate unity and consistency as we help our communities and clients.

Over the past two years, our community has faced immense challenges due to the aftermath of hurricanes and severe storms, damaging homes, businesses, and communities. Disaster survivors were forced to leave their homes because they couldn’t afford to fix them. A Legal Services Corporation grant enabled us to provide extra aid to our clients and communities for disaster-related cases. We also started a housing unit with the help of a HUD grant focused on eviction prevention. We now have a medical-legal partnership with Humana Healthy Horizons of Louisiana for housing assistance.

ALSC doesn’t just provide high-quality legal services; we also teach people about their rights and help them access legal information. We partnered with the Louisiana Bar Foundation, Justice for All Commission, and Lagniappe Law Lab to open legal kiosks in rural or “legal desert” areas. These legal kiosks will provide self-help information, access to virtual court hearings, and virtual meetings with pro bono lawyers and legal services attorneys.

We are proud of the progress we have made and the positive impact we are striving to achieve. As we move forward, we remain committed to working hard to fulfill our mission and stick to our values. We will leverage technology, strengthen our teams, and reach out to our communities. Together, we will continue to face challenges, deliver exceptional legal services, and make a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

# TABLE OF **CONTENTS**

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<b>02</b>	<b>MESSAGE FROM ALSC LEADERSHIP</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>ABOUT ALSC</b>
<b>05</b>	<b>ALSC LEADERSHIP</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>SERVICE AREAS</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>WHO DO WE SERVE</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>CASE CLOSURES</b>
<b>09</b>	<b>HOUSING UNIT</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>DISASTER UNIT</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>CHILD-IN-NEED-OF-CARE UNIT</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE LAW UNIT</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>FAMILY LAW AND LITIGATION UNIT</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>PROBONO UNIT</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>2022 FINANCIALS</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>LIST OF SUPPORTERS</b>

# MISSION

We provide exceptional civil legal services by advocating for fairness, protection and justice for our disadvantaged client community.

# VISION

Our disadvantaged client community has easy and timely access to exceptional civil legal assistance.

## History

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Acadiana Legal Service Corporation (ALSC) is a non-profit organization, funded primarily by the Legal Service Corporation (LSC) and the Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF), to provide free legal aid in civil matters to economically disadvantaged persons living in our service area.

We were incorporated in 1978 and began serving 6 parishes in 1979. We expanded our service area to 8 parishes in 1981. We added 3 additional parishes in 1992 with the merger of the former LSC-funded provider in central Louisiana. By 2002, we expanded to a 16-parish service area by adding 5 parishes in southwest Louisiana. In 2017, with additional LSC funding, we were able to acquire 26 additional parishes in north Louisiana. Consequently, we are currently serving a total of 42 parishes in central and north Louisiana, encompassing most parishes west of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers.

The founders of ALSC understood the ideal that providing civil legal representation to the marginalized has the power to bring about hope, dignity, and justice for the individual and the community as a whole. We are committed to continuing the mission of making a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients and community by helping to address their critical legal problems, such as domestic violence and other family law disputes, consumer finance, housing, public benefits, health, education, employment, and disaster benefits.



# ALSC LEADERSHIP

## OFFICERS

Susan K. Jones, President

George D. Ernest, III, Vice President

Anna Simmons, Secretary

Julhelene Jackson, Treasurer

## MEMBERS

Cynthia Cobb

Stacy Guice

Sylvia Hill

Karen C. McLellan

Brannon Mernard

Ann Poole

Tamara Battles

Santrica Pope

Theresa Richard

Chantell M. Smith

Melody Trout

Mary Winchell

Lindsay Meador Young

James E. Calhoun

## EXECUTIVE STAFF

Sachida R. Raman, Executive Director

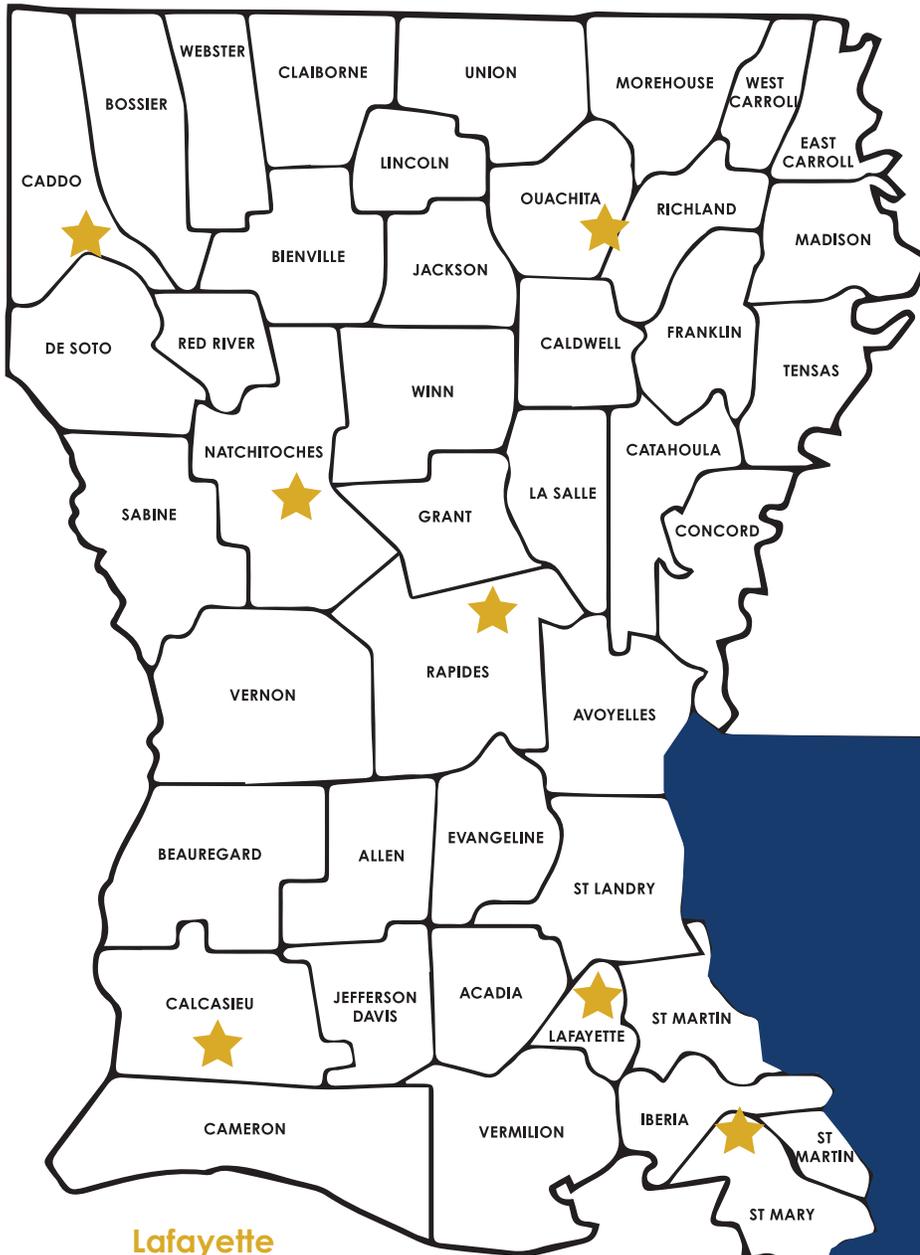
Tamiko Chatman, Deputy Director

Thomas H. Fields, Litigation Director

Sandra Pofier, Chief Financial Officer

# SERVICE AREAS

# Parish Map



## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### Shreveport

720 Travis Street  
Shreveport, LA 71101

### Monroe

3016 Cameron Street  
Monroe, LA 71201

### Natchitoches

134 St. Denis Street  
Natchitoches, LA 71457

### Alexandria

1808 Jackson Street  
Alexandria, LA 71301

### Lafayette

1020 Surrey Street  
Lafayette, LA 70501

### Lake Charles

2911 Ryan Street  
Lake Charles, LA 70601

### Franklin

1407 Barrow St., Suite H-1  
Franklin, LA 70538

# Who Do We Serve

## OUR PRIORITIES

Preservation of the Home

Preservation and Maintenance of the Family

Preservation of Individual Rights

Maintenance of Economic Stability

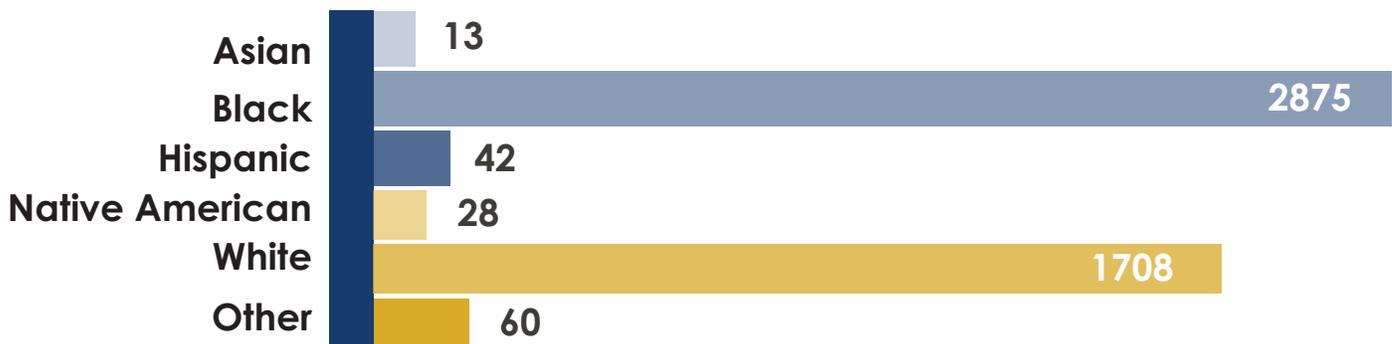
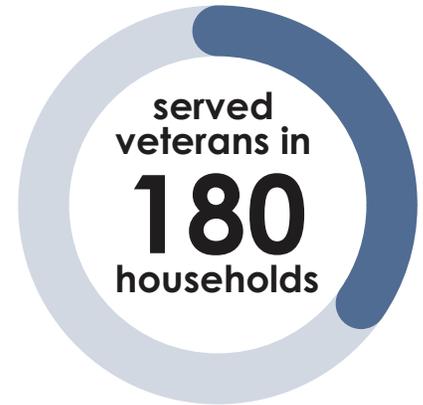
Maintenance of Safety and Health

Total Persons Served

12,008

Children Served

5,377



# By the Numbers



Applications  
**6,674**  
opened



Total Persons  
Served  
**12,008**

Closed Cases

**5,968**

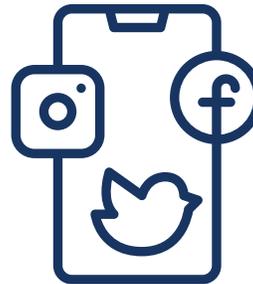


Website Visits

**18,796**

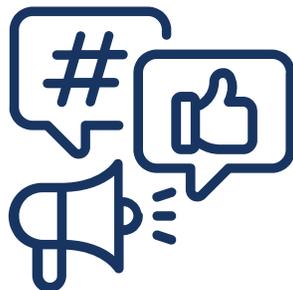


Helped  
**180**  
households  
with veterans



Provided legal  
education to  
**15,092**  
people.

Referred  
**325**  
people to  
other providers  
and services



People reached  
through media  
**46,376**



# LAW UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

## HOUSING UNIT

Attorneys

3

Support Staff

2

Evictions Avoided

68

Persons helped

663

## GOOD STORY

\*Janice, is disabled and has a Section 8 voucher. Her landlord, Mr. Jones, filed an eviction against her for non-payment of rent when she refused to pay a fee for lawn care services. Although these fees were not included in the lease agreement, Mr. Jones refused to accept Janices's rent payment without the added charge. The local City Marshal served our client with a 5-day Notice to Vacate for nonpayment of rent. The landlord filed the eviction with the local City Court before the 5-day notice had expired. We filed Exceptions and an Answer on behalf of Ms. Smith alleging prematurity. During the eviction hearing, the local City Court Judge stated that our client had been given 5 full days' notice because the Court was including weekends in its computation of time. We were able to argue that weekends are excluded in the computation of time for periods less than 7 days. The Judge confirmed this by checking the Code of Civil Procedure and Revised Statutes during the hearing. The eviction was then dismissed. The Judge announced that the local City Court had been handling their evictions wrong for the last 15 years and instructed the City Marshal to begin excluding the weekends in the computation of time for such evictions from then on.

\*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

The Housing Unit of Acadiana Legal Service Corporation works to protect housing rights for low-income homeowners and tenants. By offering our legal expertise on these issues, ALSC helps families, seniors, and other vulnerable members of our community stay in their homes and avoid homelessness. We advance housing justice for low-income tenants by preventing evictions, representing tenants in eviction hearings, preserving affordable housing, improving existing housing conditions, and protecting tenants' rights. Our unit provided free legal advice, counsel and representation to income-eligible clients including foreclosure prevention through foreclosure defense, mortgage modification, and pre-foreclosure issues. Our focus in 2022 was enforcing tenant's rights throughout all of our service area by education and preventing evictions by representing tenants in eviction hearings.

We were able to decrease the amount of evictions by 15% through representation and expanded awareness of our department by increasing our outreach events and networking to north Louisiana through connecting with partners in housing authorities and homelessness organizations in Quachita, East Carroll, Caddo, and Rapides parishes. Moving forward we are focusing on preserving and increasing affordable housing, working with partners to improve housing conditions and continue to prevent and defending against foreclosures.

# Housing Law

# Disaster Grant 2022 Award

## DISASTER UNIT

Attorneys      Support Staff

4

3

## PROBLEMS HELPED

Successions  
Title Clearing  
FEMA Appeals

Cases Opened

60

Cases Closed

5

## OUTREACH EFFORTS



Justice Bus Events

6

People Reached

3801



## EMPOWERING RESILIENCE: REBUILDING LIVES FROM A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE.

Between 2020 and 2021, Louisiana faced seven government-declared disasters, including hurricanes, storms, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Acadiana Legal Service Corporation (ALSC) played a crucial role in supporting surrounding communities during these events, particularly Hurricanes Laura, Ida, and Delta, along with Winter Storm Uri and the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding of May 2021. The impacts of these disasters were evident in Lake Charles, Louisiana, which saw the largest population decline among nearly a thousand surveyed metropolitan areas from 2019 to 2020.

Natural disasters don't affect everyone equally. While hurricanes and floods impact people irrespective of their status, they disproportionately affect those already struggling, revealing existing inequalities. These disparities dictate who suffers the most, how much assistance they receive from insurance and the government, and how swiftly they recover. Sadly, individuals with lower incomes often struggle to fully recover. Recognizing this, ALSC secured a grant to offer legal aid, outreach, and mobile services. These resources aim to help disaster survivors piece their lives back together after the 2020-2021 disasters.



## GOOD STORY

We impact lives in what may seem to others the smallest of ways, but are a exceedingly impactful to the people we serve. \*Beth is an only child and a survivor of domestic violence, subjected to financial and emotional abuse in her current home. Her father, a pastor, was a solid foundation for Beth. He had the foresight to protect her inheritance in a will; however, the will was invalid under Louisiana law. Beth came to ALSC to probate her father's will so she could pay the contractors who repaired her home following damage from Hurricanes Laura and Delta. Beth had no access to the money her father intended to leave her to pay these contractors, and she was threatened by the contractors with a lawsuit for nonpayment for services. Our Disaster Unit provided her with strategic legal assistance to help Beth gain access to her inheritance, despite the invalid will, pay the contractors, and avoid a lawsuit.

\*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

The "Justice Bus," an innovative approach to legal services delivery, was introduced in November 2022 at the statewide Disaster Symposium in Baton Rouge. The bus is a fully functional mobile office that provides legal aid and community outreach, serving as a visible symbol wherever it travels. This concept garnered a positive response from the community. The Disaster Unit collaborated with local groups, particularly in areas with limited legal access due to distance from attorney services, to bring awareness to the unit's resources and services.

The Disaster Unit's primary goal is to transform lives and reconstruct communities by offering vital legal assistance to those in need. Legal issues, such as tangled property titles and access to rebuilding funds, can haunt survivors for years and prevent many from returning home and rebuilding. Our future focus remains on identifying those requiring legal support to help them return home and establish sustainable lives after the storm clears.

**ADDITIONAL  
AWARDS**

**Louisiana Office of  
Community Development  
Awarded**

**\$150K**

**AARP GRANT 50+  
Affected by Hurricane Laura  
Awarded**

**\$150K**

# Child in Need of Care

## LAW UNIT HIGHLIGHTS



### CHILD IN NEED OF CARE UNIT

Attorneys Support Staff

20 10

Total Children Served

11,242

Total Court Appearances

12,944

### GOOD STORY

\*Patricia's story is a testament to the power of resilience and opportunities that arise in the challenging circumstances of foster care. Our CINC attorney began representing Patricia when she entered foster care at age sixteen with her infant son, Karson. While her journey through the foster care system was not without challenges, both Patricia and Karson have thrived. She was placed in an extraordinary foster home; the foster mom allowed Patricia the freedom to be a teenager while nurturing her responsibilities as a mother to her infant son.

Karson has celebrated his second birthday and Patricia will graduate from high school with honors. With legal guidance from her CINC attorney, Patricia decided to remain in extended foster care and pursue a college education, which will be funded 100% by the state. With the guidance of her CINC attorney, the support of her foster family, and her own determination, Patricia is creating a bright future for herself and her beloved Karson.

\*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

The Child In Need of Care (CINC) Unit provides client directed representation to children in abuse and neglect cases. The representation ensures that the wishes of the child is heard and advocated for. The range of client population for CINC clients is from newborn to one day shy of a child's eighteenth birthday. The CINC Unit is a resource driven Unit that provides representation in 47 jurisdictions throughout the north, central, southwest and south Louisiana. The mission of the representation in CINC cases is to provide quality and zealous representation to the child client based on their wishes and to reach the best possible outcomes for the client. The representation of CINC clients is based on a case by case basis as no two cases are alike.





ALU encompasses more than just its association with Administrative Law; it also stands for important values like Action, Loyalty, and Understanding. Our skilled ALU team, consisting of adept attorneys and paralegal advocates, is committed to diligently helping individuals with benefit recovery, explaining the complexities of the disability process, clarifying matters related to overpayments, and fostering comprehension of civil legal rights associated with Medicare and Medicaid.

These efforts are directed particularly towards our disadvantaged and elderly population. Our team excels in the domains of effective communication, adept time management, precise organization, and astute problem-solving.

GOOD STORY

\*Kay was originally awarded \$583 in monthly SSA benefits instead of the full amount of \$841 in 2020 because she was living in the household of another individual. Our senior paralegal advocate assisted Kay showing SSA that the client would be paying her “fair share” of the household expenses after finding Kay was eligible for a little over \$12,000 in past due benefits. As a result, Kay’s monthly Social Security benefits increased to the full amount of \$841 per month!

\*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT  
Attorneys Support Staff

2

7

Total Recovery in dollars

\$1,805,980

Persons helped

717

# Family Law

## LAW UNIT HIGHLIGHTS



### GOOD STORY

\*Tina, a mother of 4 children and a victim of domestic violence, was involved in an incident in which she had to protect herself by shooting at her husband. Due to the abuse, her husband, with a long list of criminal history in the parish, was arrested and incarcerated. Our family law team was able to file for divorce, sole custody and a permanent injunction from abuse under the Post Separation Family Violence Relief Act (PSFVRA). At trial, the husband agreed to the custody and divorce, so the judge ruled in Tina's favor by granting her sole custody, and a permanent injunction from abuse.

\*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

### FAMILY LAW UNIT

Attorneys Support Staff

12 11

Total Open Cases

569

Total Closed Cases

2,395

### LITIGATION UNIT

Attorneys Support Staff

7 7

### GOOD STORY

\*Anna and her sisters inherited a home from their parents. Her sisters agreed to donate their shares to Anne, but they were in town for a limited time. The Litigation Unit met with the family to gather all necessary documents. Our staff drove to Anna's home to execute her acceptance of the donations. She and her sisters were grateful for the legal knowledge and prompt action our attorneys and paralegals provided, resulting in Anne having full ownership of her childhood home.

\*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

Cases Open

817

Cases Closed

1,947

*Housing and Disaster Unit Cases included.*

# Litigation



## ALSC PRO BONO TEAM GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND TO SUPPORT LEGAL AID.

In support of Pro Bono Week, our team participated in Lafayette Bar Association and Foundation’s “Jeans Day” fundraiser. We support all our local and regional pro bono programs across the state of Louisiana. We have partnerships with the Lafayette Bar, Shreveport Bar and CENLA. Our mission this past year was to recruit more attorney volunteers to aid in our cases in the northern parts of our state where access to justice is severely hard to obtain or is not affordable for our low-income community.

By giving back to our pro bono community, we participated in the self-help desk with the Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project. Gregory Hopkins, ALSC Pro Bono Manager, along with Nancy Anglin, Paralegal, and Lizz White, Executive Director of the Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project, offered assistance to those seeking to self represent in civil matters, including finding the proper forms and documentation for a legal matter at the Ninth Judicial District Courthouse in Alexandria.

### PRO BONO UNIT

Attorneys

1

Support Staff

2

Cases Opened

214

Cases Closed

202

### GOOD STORY

\*Randy came to ALSC in desperate need of obtaining his birth certificate so he could secure employment. Randy was homeless, very anxious to begin a new chapter of his life, and was missing a key part to get him to that exciting new life. Randy needed to establish his identity. Our partner, Lafayette Bar Foundation, obtained a certified copy of his birth certificate. Through our strategic partnership with the local area bar foundation, Randy was able to get a new job and start the steps towards a better life.

\*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual.

Pro Bono

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

# 2022 Synopsis

## REVENUE

Grant Revenue  
**\$10,356,976**

Interest Earnings  
**\$24,487**

Donations  
**\$9,961**

Other revenues  
**\$148,408**

## EXPENSES

Legal Services  
**\$8,560,620**

Supportive Services  
**\$1,382,144**



# Thank you to our Supporters!

AARP  
Alan Deckelbaum & Beth Zweig  
AmazonSmile  
Appleseed  
Beauregard COA  
Bienville COA  
Bossier COA  
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Melanie Addy  
Morehouse COA  
MyWalgreens Program  
Natchitoches COA  
NELA Community Foundation  
Ouachita COA  
Ped C. Kay, III  
Red River COA  
Sabine COA  
Shannin West  
State of Louisiana - Office of  
Community Development  
Target Circle Program  
The GoodCoin Foundation  
ThredPartners  
United Way of Southwest  
Louisiana  
Vandana Chaturvedi  
Vernon COA  
Webster COA  
West Carroll COA



## Get Connected!



# ALSC

ACADIANA LEGAL SERVICE CORPORATION  
*EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL*

**LSC** | America's Partner  
for Equal Justice  
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION



LOUISIANA BAR  
**FOUNDATION**  
FUNDING CIVIL LEGAL AID



1 866 ASK ALS



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