



Senior Legal Services

Protecting Rights, Empowering Lives

Serving Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties

2025 Impact Report

Our Purpose

We strive to empower seniors and other vulnerable populations by providing **free legal services** that protect their rights and ensure their **dignity**. We envision a community where every individual has access to **justice** and the legal support they need to live with **security** and **respect**.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

For more than five decades, Senior Legal Services has been guided by a clear and enduring purpose: **making sure older adults are not alone when they need legal help the most**. As we enter 2026, that purpose remains as vital as ever. At a time of growing uncertainty, our lawyers, advocates, law fellows, and support staff stand beside seniors in our community—offering stability, trusted guidance, and a steady presence during life's most difficult moments.

This past year brought both meaningful progress and rising challenges. In 2025, we served our elder neighbors and families across Santa Cruz and San Benito counties—women and men from 60 to 97 years old who were doing everything they could to stay in their homes, protect their income, and age with dignity. We did this through our five core programs: Housing, Government Benefits, Elder Abuse and Discrimination, Future Planning, and Consumer Protection.

The housing and homelessness crisis continued to shape much of our work. We stood with seniors and families facing eviction, helped them reach workable agreements with landlords, and made sure their homes were safe and accessible. For many, this meant **relief from the fear of losing the place they call home**.

We also supported seniors who had been taken advantage of by unfair business practices, were overwhelmed by credit card debt, or worried about losing everything they had worked for. Others came to us wanting to plan ahead—to put important documents in place so they could make their own choices and **face the future with peace of mind**.

When seniors lost their Social Security safety net, we stood by them—challenging denials and **protecting the benefits they depend on to survive**. And when seniors faced abuse or discrimination, we worked to ensure they were **safe, treated with dignity, and protected under the law**.

Seniors remain at the heart of our mission. They come to us with their daughters and sons, sometimes supported by a grandchild. Many come alone and have no one else to turn to.

As we look ahead to 2026, the challenges facing older adults are clear. Many continue to struggle to stay in their homes and afford basic necessities. We stand up for them in court, challenge unfair decisions, and help secure the benefits that allow them to live with stability and dignity.

With your continued support, Senior Legal Services will build on the momentum of the past year, adapt to a changing legal landscape, and remain a **steadfast advocate for justice, dignity, and security** for older adults in our community.

Thank you for standing with us—and with the seniors we serve—as we continue this work together.

With gratitude,
Rebecca



Rebecca Steckler

Executive Director, Senior Legal Services



How Our Programs Make a Difference

Our five core programs work together to provide older adults with the support they need to stay safe, stable, and independent. Whether helping someone keep their **housing**, resolve a **financial crisis**, access essential **benefits, plan for the future**, or secure **protection from abuse or discrimination**, our team meets seniors where they are and stands with them through complicated legal challenges.

Each program strengthens the others, creating a safety net that helps older adults in our community move forward with confidence and dignity.



I felt support throughout this process, non-judgmentally, unconditionally. It made me feel grateful that SLS kept in touch and was able to help throughout. It was admirable to know they honored my legal rights, despite the opposition.

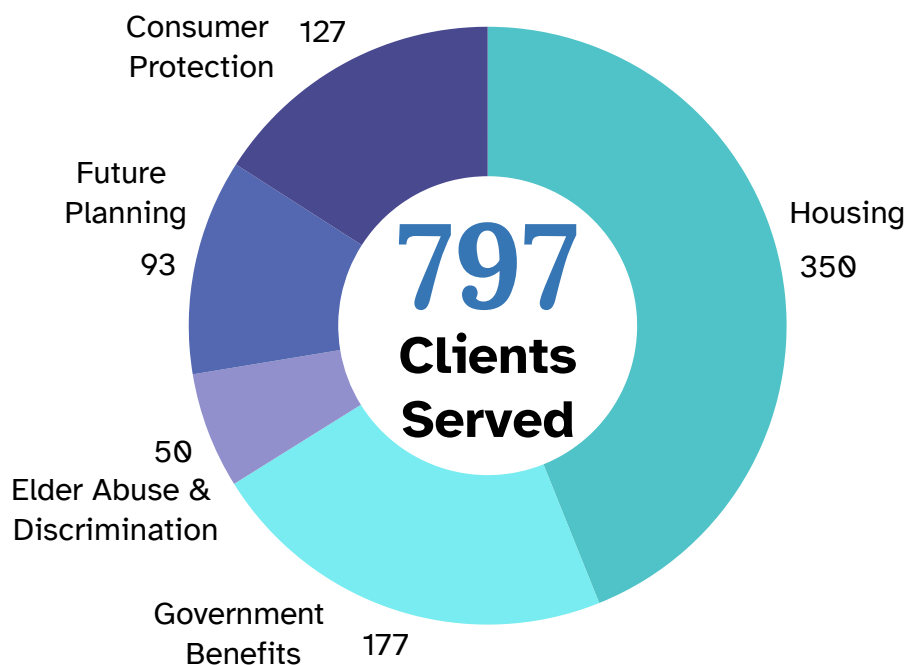
- Client Testimonial

12,150

Hours of Legal Aid Work

\$877,856

Financial Benefits for Clients



Housing

Housing instability is one of the most urgent challenges facing our communities, particularly for individuals living on fixed or limited incomes. We educate tenants about their rights and responsibilities. Through our Housing Program, we help clients navigate **eviction threats**, **unsafe living conditions**, and **housing-related disputes** that place their stability at risk.

By intervening before crises escalate and advocating for fair outcomes, we prevent evictions when possible and reduce the emotional and financial trauma caused by housing loss, thus helping seniors maintain stability during periods of profound uncertainty.



350
Clients Served

44%
Of All Cases

“

I was at sea, not knowing I had legal rights with my landlord. Senior Legal Services empowered me to protect myself.

- Client Testimonial



Government Benefits

For many seniors, access to public benefits can mean the difference between stability and crisis. With one of the fastest-growing senior populations in California, tens of thousands of residents depend on Medicare, Medi-Cal, and Social Security. We help older neighbors secure and maintain **critical income** and **healthcare** supports when they are denied, delayed, or threatened with termination. By assisting clients through the complex appeals processes, we help prevent sudden loss of income or medical coverage, reduce financial stress, and ensure clients receive the benefits that are due to them.

177

Clients Served

22%

Experiencing Homelessness



Por la excelente ayuda que me brindaste, gratuitamente y por tu tiempo al tramitar mi aplicacion hacia el sebuo de incapacidad nuevamenta gracias.

- Client Testimonial



Thank you for the excellent assistance you provided, free of charge, and for your time in processing my disability insurance application.



Elder Abuse and Discrimination

Older adults can be especially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and discrimination due to age, health challenges, isolation, and power imbalances. We help clients confront unsafe, coercive, and unlawful treatment that threatens their **well-being and autonomy**. By asserting their legal rights and pursuing accountability, we work to stop ongoing harm, protect dignity, and ensure older adults are treated with fairness and respect in their homes and communities.

50

Clients Served

55%

Frail or Disabled



I want to see every senior we serve treated as well as I treat my own Abuelita and Abuelito. We provide the legal protection to make sure that happens.

*- Rosalina Nuñez Manfreda,
Supervising Attorney*





Future Planning

Planning ahead can provide stability and reassurance during periods of change or uncertainty. Through our Future Planning Program, we help clients prepare essential legal documents that reflect their wishes and protect their interests. By supporting thoughtful decision-making around **healthcare** and **finances**, we help reduce confusion, conflict, and crisis later on, giving clients greater peace of mind and helping families navigate the future with clarity, dignity, and confidence.

“

Senior Legal assisted me with a durable power of attorney. They were wonderful. They provided prompt, efficient services. They helped me to understand the document and explained everything to me. They were professional in every way and were such a great help for me.

- Client Testimonial

93

Clients Served

77

Average Client Age



Consumer Protection

Seniors are often targeted by fraud, scams, and other unfair or deceptive financial practices that can quickly undermine their stability and independence. Through our Consumer Protection Program, we help clients resolve disputes involving **debt, contracts, and financial abuse** that place limited resources at risk. By challenging unlawful practices and advocating for fair outcomes, we help reduce financial harm, protect essential assets, and prevent economic crises that can threaten housing, healthcare, and overall security.



127

Clients Served

\$18,000

**Median Client
Income**

“

Senior Legal Services took my info after brief intake and phone interviews. A short time later, I received a full refund! SLS made all the difference and gave me peace of mind.

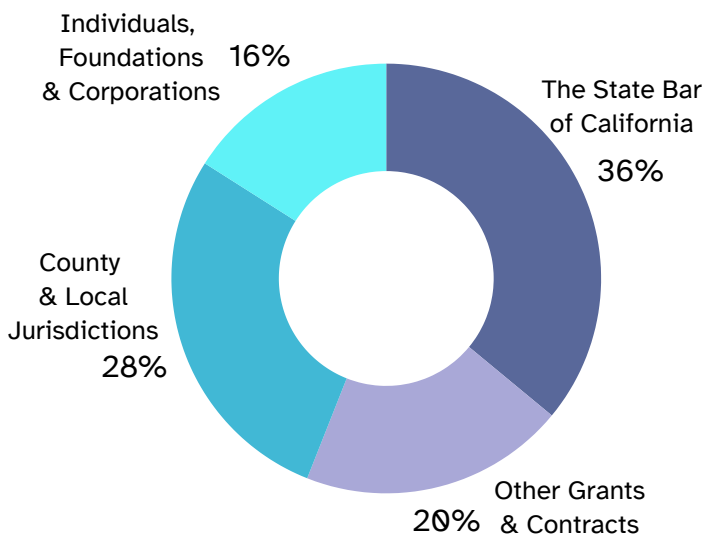
- Client Testimonial



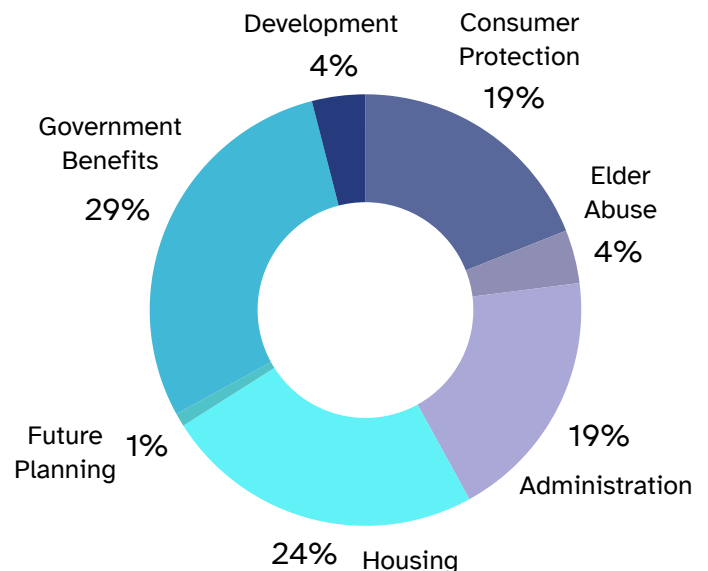
Budget Report

We believe trust starts with transparency. The charts below show the sources of our 2025 revenue and how those funds were allocated across our programs to support the seniors who rely on us.

Revenue
\$1,259,823



Expenses
\$1,211,361



This represents our audited revenue and expenses for fiscal year 2025.

Our Supporters

We are deeply grateful to each donor, foundation, and public partner whose generosity made it possible for Senior Legal Services to protect the rights and independence of older adults and other vulnerable populations in 2025. Your support ensures that seniors in our community have someone to turn to when facing eviction, abuse, fraud, or loss of benefits. **Thank you!**



Institutional Supporters & Partners



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Communications Intern*

Our sincere thanks to Riley Cunan, Matthew Demirel, Bryan Martinez, and Katherine Sarna for designing and producing this report.

Help Seniors Thrive

Your support transforms lives. Every day, we help seniors stay in their homes, access benefits they rely on, stay safe from abuse and discrimination, plan for the future, and recover from financial difficulties. Older adults in our community rely on us for legal protection—and every gift makes a real, lasting difference.

Together, we can ensure older adults live with stability, dignity, and peace of mind.



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Scan the QR code or visit the link to join us in supporting seniors across Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties.



help@seniorlegal.org



(831) 426-8824



seniorlegal.org

Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.

Charity
Navigator



+ FOUR-STAR +
2025

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Senior Legal Services is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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