



## Pinellas County Justice and Consumer Services Year Report 2016

Program Dates	January – December 2016
Agency Name	Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc.
Program Name	Civil Legal Aid Services
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### Description of Program

#### Agency History:

Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc., (GLS) is a 501(c)3 organization which began providing free legal assistance to low income persons in Pinellas County in 1979 at offices in Clearwater and St. Petersburg. It also has offices in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

Bay Area Legal Services, Inc., (BALS) was founded in 1967 and since that time has provided free high quality legal services and education to low-income and vulnerable residents in the Tampa Bay Area. In 2003, BALS extended our services to Pinellas county and has office located in St. Petersburg and Clearwater.

Community Law Program (CLP) provides a variety of free legal services for low-income residents throughout Pinellas County, Florida. We have a panel of very dedicated volunteer attorneys in the St Petersburg/Pinellas County area who are available to provide free legal representation in numerous types of civil cases, such as bankruptcy, family law (including divorce, child support, and custody), wills and advance directives, housing (including foreclosures and landlord-tenant issues), and probate.

#### Overall Services Provided:

GLS, along with its partners BALS and CLP, provide critical free civil legal services in the following areas:

- Supporting the family
- Preservation of housing
- Ensuring economic stability
- Safeguarding individual rights
- Upholding the protections of populations with special vulnerabilities

Target populations include:

- Victims of domestic violence
- Public and federally subsidized housing residents
- Relative caregivers
- Victims of consumer fraud
- Homeless individuals
- Families facing evictions
- Victims of human trafficking, etc.



Our attorneys and pro bono volunteer attorneys provide advice and counsel, brief service, referral, and representation in administrative, state, federal, and appellate courts. Additionally, GLS and our partners educate the Tampa Bay community on relevant legal issues and provide legal support and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations that target the needs of our clients.

**Services provided specifically with Pinellas County Government dollars:**

GLS offers civil legal services to Pinellas County residents in the areas of: family law, elder law, immigration law, housing law, tax law, and public benefits advocacy. Our services directly align with the County's strategic plan. Specifically, our services:

- Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protection services to ensure a safe and secure community (2.1)
  - GLS's domestic violence, unaccompanied minors, immigration, and human trafficking projects help ensure a safe and secure community by advocating for victims of crime
- Provide comprehensive services to connect our veterans and dependents to the benefits they have earned (2.3)
  - Through appeal services, GLS addresses the legal needs of veterans and dependents including disputes over benefits, disability, housing issues, employment matters, etc.
- Support programs that seek to prevent and remedy cause of homelessness and move individuals and families from homelessness to permanent housing (2.4)
  - Nearly all of GLS's programs help to prevent or remedy causes of homelessness. From helping persons obtain benefits to which they are legally entitled to representing clients in landlord/tenant disputes to assisting a victim of crime to access victims' compensation to afford housing, GLS aids clients in moving toward self-sufficiency, which in turn empowers them to maintain permanent housing.

**BALS:** Pinellas County dollars assist with the funding of the Bay Area Volunteer Lawyers Program-NW located in Clearwater. The BAVLP-NW coordinates the efforts of pro bono attorneys and members of the Clearwater Bar Association. With additional funding sources BALS provides free legal services to the low-income community through our offices and Centralized Telephone Intake. We provide extensive representation on landlord tenant and consumer issues in South Pinellas County. We also provide assistance with relative caregivers seeking temporary custody. We have also started providing services to veterans at the Bay Pines VA; a project that was initiated at GLS through an Equal Justice Works Fellowship which has since been transferred to BALS. This coordination is a testament to the strong partnership between legal aid organizations in Pinellas.

**CLP:** Pinellas County dollars fund a portion of our Civil Clinic Program.

**Population Served:**

**GLS:** Individuals whose household income does not exceed 150% of federal poverty guidelines.

**BALS:** Pinellas County residents.

**CLP:** Southern Pinellas County residents whose household incomes are at or below 185% of the federal poverty guidelines.



Demographics of Population Served

	CLP	GLS CLW	GLS STP	BALS	TOTAL		CLP	GLS CLW	GLS STP	BALS	TOTAL
Males	344	151	486	39	1020	Females	642	289	642	56	1629
Caucasian	171	115	307	25	618	Caucasian	338	194	372	40	945
African- American	127	18	106	10	261	African- American	216	55	150	5	426
Hispanic	25	10	54	4	354	Hispanic	58	33	91	10	192
Asian	5	2	5	0	12	Asian	11	1	12	1	25
Native American	0	1	2	0	3	Native American	0	0	4	0	4
Other	16	5	12	0	33	Other	19	6	13	0	38



Demographics of Population Served

	CLP	GLS CLW	GLS STP	BALS	TOTAL		CLP	GLS CLW	GLS STP	BALS	TOTAL
<b>Males</b>	344	151	487	39	1021	<b>Females</b>	642	289	642	57	1630
<b>Caucasian</b>	171	115	307	25	618	<b>Caucasian</b>	338	194	372	41	945
<b>African- American</b>	127	18	106	10	261	<b>African- American</b>	216	55	150	5	426
<b>Hispanic</b>	25	10	54	4	354	<b>Hispanic</b>	58	33	91	10	192
<b>Asian</b>	5	2	5	0	12	<b>Asian</b>	11	1	12	1	25
<b>Native American</b>	0	1	2	0	3	<b>Native American</b>	0	0	4	0	4
<b>Other</b>	16	5	12	0	33	<b>Other</b>	19	6	13	0	38



**Categories of Cases Worked In Pinellas County  
January- December 2016**

<b>Legal Problem Category</b>	<b>Community Law Program</b>	<b>GLS Clearwater</b>	<b>GLS St. Petersburg</b>	<b>BALS Self Help Clinic Clearwater Courthouse</b>	<b>TOTAL Clients Served</b>
Housing	131	378	328	3	<b>840</b>
Family	495	3	107	45	<b>650</b>
Consumer	129	42	156	17	<b>344</b>
Income Maintenance	7	3	73	5	<b>88</b>
Misc. (includes Advanced Directives, Wills)	201	0	97	10	<b>308</b>
Employment (includes Taxes)	0	1	88	5	<b>94</b>
Education	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Individual Rights	24	13	270	7	<b>314</b>
Health	0	0	8	1	<b>9</b>
Juvenile	3	0	2	0	<b>5</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>1129</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>2652</b>

<b>Community Law Program</b>	<b>Gulfcoast Legal Services</b>	<b>Bay Area Legal Services</b>
<b>990</b>	<b>1569</b>	<b>93</b>



<b>Reason Closed</b>	<b>Community Law Program</b>	<b>GLS Clearwater</b>	<b>GLS St. Petersburg</b>	<b>BALS Self Help Clinic Clwtr Courthouse</b>	<b>TOTAL Clients Served</b>
A - Advice and Counsel	734	266	446	54	<b>1500</b>
B - Brief Service	156	101	538	16	<b>811</b>
F - Negotiated Settlement W/O Litigation	0	25	20	1	<b>46</b>
G - Negotiated Settlement With Litigation	12	6	15	2	<b>35</b>
H - Administrative Agency Decision	1	10	67	0	<b>78</b>
IA - Uncontested Court Decision	17	3	3	1	<b>24</b>
IB - Contested Court Decision	11	0	17	0	<b>28</b>
IC - Appeals	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
K - Other	30	29	0	0	<b>59</b>
L - Extensive Service	10	0	23	0	<b>33</b>
XA - Client Withdrew Before Legal Assistance	8	0	0	1	<b>9</b>
XB - Client Gave Incorrect Information at Intake - Not Eligible	4	0	0	2	<b>6</b>
XC - Administrative or computer error	0	0	0	13	<b>13</b>
XE - Not timely closed	4	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
XF - Required Documentation Not Present	3	0	0	3	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>1129</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>2652</b>