



# IMPACT REPORT

## 2025

[LEGALLINK.ORG](https://legallink.org)



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## ROOTED LOCALLY. PROVEN NATIONALLY.

Dear Friends and Partners,

2025 tested us — and proved us.

As threats to civil liberties intensified, the demand for Legal Link's work became impossible to ignore. Our Legal First Aid® curriculum is now taught across six states. More than 4,000 people are certified and counting. But the numbers only tell part of the story.

Legal First Aid® equips the people already doing the work: a caseworker in Oakland stopping an eviction, a rural provider in Oklahoma restoring a family's benefits, a navigator in Virginia catching an immigration hurdle before it derails a new start. They were already there. We gave them the tools.

Because the law shouldn't be a mystery, and accessing justice shouldn't be a luxury. In 2025, we didn't just grow the work — we started to change the infrastructure around it. We moved our curriculum online, helped launch the US Legal Empowerment Network, and filed a petition to the California Supreme Court, alongside the Legal Aid Association of California, OneJustice, and Stanford, to formally authorize Community Justice Workers in our home state.

As the year closed, we honored our Founder and Co-Executive Director Sacha Steinberger as she completed her remarkable 12-year run with Legal Link. Her courage is woven into everything we do. I now carry the work forward as sole Executive Director, joined by three talented new teammates who bring fresh energy and deep commitment. Together, guided by a new three-year plan for national expansion, we head into this next chapter with a strong foundation, growing reach, and a lot of momentum.

What drives us is the ripple effect: families stabilized, providers empowered, and justice gaps closed — not from the top down, but from the ground up. None of it happens without you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KCR".

Kate Crowley Richardson  
Executive Director, Legal Link

# 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

DEEP ROOTS, **WIDE REACH**



## California Legal First Aid® Network



**1,586**

active members



**201**

Participating Orgs



**244**

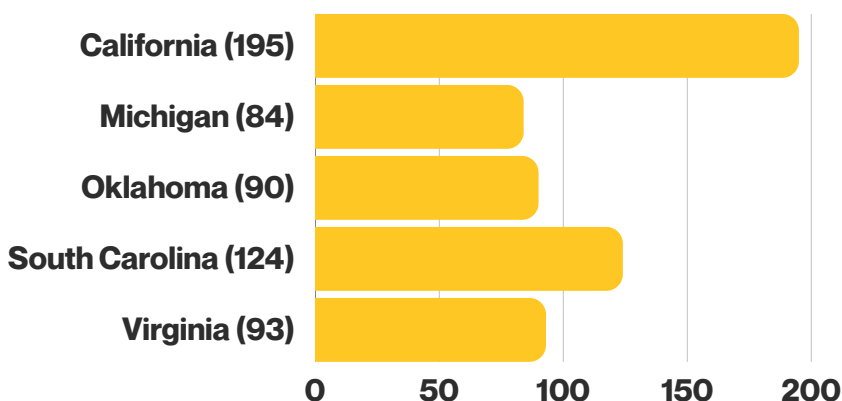
FREE LEGAL CONSULTS

**195 people  
trained in  
California in  
2025. An  
estimated  
20,000+  
Californians  
reached.**

Because seven in ten California households face a civil legal problem every year — and Legal First Aid® providers are already there.

# 586

**Community partners certified in  
Legal First Aid across the country**



# 91%

evidenced a  
significant increase  
in legal capability  
following  
Legal First Aid®  
certification

Since our founding in 2015...

**4,207 CERTIFIED IN  
LEGAL FIRST AID  
NATIONALLY (2,047 IN  
CALIFORNIA ALONE)**



# SCALING LEGAL FIRST AID®



## The Legal First Aid® Curriculum

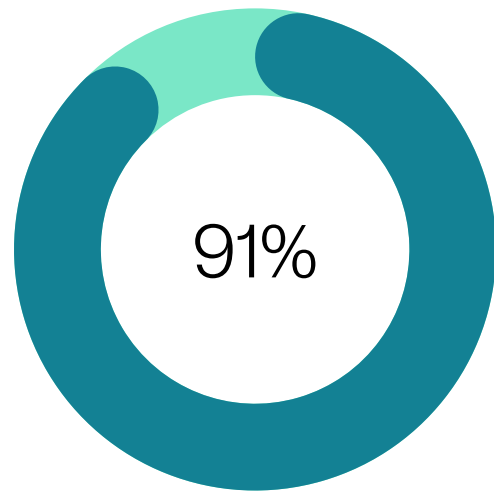
In 2025, Legal Link standardized Legal First Aid® into a streamlined 2-part model designed for adult learners: a self-paced asynchronous component followed by live skills practice sessions that flex between virtual and in-person formats. This shift allows us to reach farther while maintaining the hands-on, practical learning that makes the training work.

### Legal First Aid® Learning Objectives:

- **Proactively surface and accurately identify** legal issues
- **Connect** clients to key legal and community resources
- **Prepare** clients for legal and related meetings
- **Support** clients through legal and related processes

### Target Outcome:

>90% increase in legal capability



**Legal capability** is a growing concept that refers to an individual's knowledge, attitude, and confidence toward the law and legal system. We track participants' legal capability as a core measure of our program impact — assessing legal knowledge, self-efficacy, and confidence before and after our training. By using validated assessments and data analysis, we are able to demonstrate meaningful, evidence-informed improvements in how participants understand and engage with the legal system. A key goal for our Legal First Aid® trainings is to reach at least 90% improvement in legal capability among participants nationwide.

# NATIONAL REACH: LEGAL FIRST AID® IN SIX STATES AND COUNTING

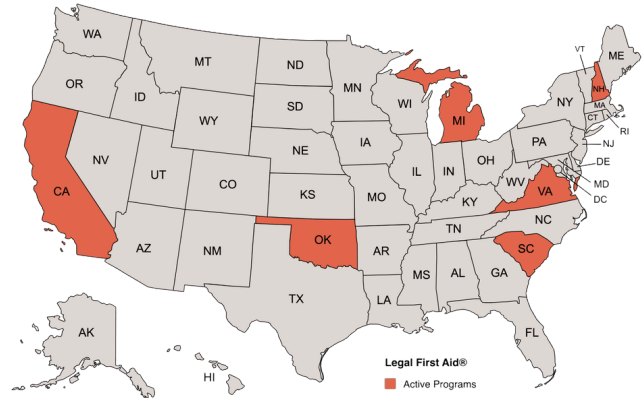
**California · Oklahoma · Virginia · Michigan · South Carolina · New Hampshire**

## **Oklahoma**

Now in its fourth year, the Oklahoma Community Justice Network, an initiative of the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation, has certified more than 600 community partners statewide.

“ The Legal First Aid training has been instrumental in our efforts to bring our organizational value of empowerment to life - by sharing this critical knowledge and confidence with case managers, social workers, librarians, teachers, and others across the state we are ensuring that Oklahomans have a better shot at resolving their legal issues and achieving stability and safety with the support of a trusted community partner.

- Katie Dilks, Executive Director, Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation



## **South Carolina**

In collaboration with Lowcountry Legal Volunteers and with support from the Center of Heirs Property, Legal Link adapted its curriculum to train service providers and community leaders in Jasper, Hampton, and Beaufort Counties, with a particular focus on housing preservation and heirs property.

## **Virginia**

The Virginia Legal Aid Society launched their Legal First Aid® training program in 2025 and has seen tremendous early success, demand, and impact.

## **New Hampshire**

Legal Link partnered with the New Hampshire Judicial Branch to conduct a landscape analysis and develop a customized curriculum, the Legal Spotters Training program, tailored to the state's unique legal landscape.

## **Michigan**

Michigan Legal Help continues to integrate Legal First Aid® into their Community Legal Connections program, delivering training in libraries, VA hospitals, and statewide workforce development settings.



Photo: Lowcountry Legal Volunteers Legal First Aid® Training in Action

# LEGAL FIRST AID® IN ACTION: KEEPING BAY AREA FAMILIES HOUSED

## San Francisco: On the Frontlines

With support from Tipping Point Community, Legal Link brought specialized Legal First Aid® training on homelessness prevention interventions to 58 frontline staff across 11 San Francisco ERAP and Family Homelessness Prevention Pilot organizations, equipping the people families turn to at their most vulnerable moments with the legal knowledge to act.

The project also includes a rigorous evaluation to measure training effectiveness and surface findings and recommendations, ensuring we learn as we go and strengthen the model for what comes next.



*Photos: Site visits with Compass Family Services and APA Family Services.*

## Santa Clara County: Strengthening the System

Legal Link partnered with Homelessness Prevention System partners in Santa Clara County to bring Legal First Aid® certification and a specialized housing stability training module county-wide. We're now working with Sacred Heart Community Service to implement the Debt Collective's Tenant Power Toolkit among non-lawyer providers, equipping frontline workers to support unrepresented tenants facing eviction before a default judgment derails their housing stability. This will be the first rollout of its kind in California outside of Los Angeles County. We're grateful to be doing this work alongside innovative, solution-driven partners, right in our own backyard.

# THE EVIDENCE: 4-STATE STUDY

California · Oklahoma · Michigan · South Carolina

From July 2024 through June 2025, Legal Link led a rigorous multi-state evaluation of Legal First Aid® in partnership with Michigan Legal Help, the Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation, and Lowcountry Legal Volunteers in South Carolina. Across 336 participants, the results were clear: Legal First Aid® works.

## Legal Insights + Improvements



**Legal First Aid® substantially increased participants' confidence and capability to navigate legal issues, validating the model's potential to build legally empowered communities nationwide.**

- James Teufel, MPH, PhD, Independent Evaluator and Principal of Help Justice

## Key Findings

### • Large to Very Large Gains in Legal Capability

Participants' perceived legal capability rose from 54 to 76 (on a 100-point scale), a *very large* improvement.

- ◇ Perceived legal knowledge increased from 51 to 80.
- ◇ Legal self-efficacy and confidence increased from 57 to 72.
- ◇ 91% of participants reported improvement in legal capability.

### • High Satisfaction and Endorsement

- ◇ 91% of participants were very or extremely satisfied with the training.
- ◇ The Net Promoter Score was 79—a “world-class” rating compared to an average of 32 in the legal sector.

### • Meaningful Participant Goals

- ◇ Most participants engaged in the training to better meet client needs, improve client outcomes, and enhance professional skills.
- ◇ After training, participants were significantly more likely to report goals around improving client outcomes and managing more tasks independently.

### • Client Impact

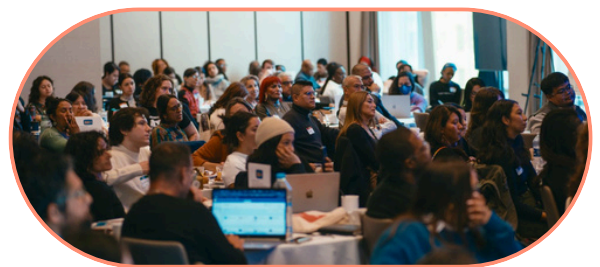
- ◇ Participants collectively served an estimated 13,734 clients in the prior 30 days, most commonly addressing housing, family/ domestic violence, and criminal justice issues.

# ADVANCING LEGAL EMPOWERMENT + COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKER ADVOCACY

## US Legal Empowerment Network

Legal empowerment works best when the people doing it work together.

What began as a weeklong leadership course in 2023 grew into a national convening in 2024, and then, in 2025, into something bigger: the launch of the US Legal Empowerment Network, a first-of-its-kind national coalition committed to putting legal knowledge in the hands of communities. We've been proud to help shape it from the start. In February 2026, the network gathered for its first official convening. Legal Link helped organize and shape the three-day Chicago gathering behind the scenes, and co-led the opening plenary — alongside Defying Legal Gravity, NYU's Bernstein Institute for Human Rights, Namati, and Beyond Legal Aid, among others — bringing together more than 150 members and global experts to share strategies, deepen relationships, and chart the path forward for community-based legal empowerment across the country.



## Community Justice Worker Advocacy

In California, most people facing a legal crisis never see a lawyer. Legal Link is working to change that — not by adding more lawyers, but by expanding who is authorized to help.

In December 2025, Legal Link joined the Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC), OneJustice, and Stanford Law's Rhode Center in filing a petition to the California Supreme Court requesting a landmark rule change: allowing trained Community Justice Workers to provide legal assistance under attorney supervision. If granted, IOLTA-funded legal aid organizations could opt into a Bar-regulated program, training and supervising community workers to perform discrete legal tasks, mirroring successful programs already operating in Alaska, Arizona, Utah, and beyond.

# DONORS & FUNDERS

Thank you to our 2025 Community of Support

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Mimi & Peter Haas Fund  
Sunlight Giving  
Tipping Point Community  
van Löben Sels/RembeRock Foundation



## Public Funders

City of San Jose, Housing Department  
Funding from the Homelessness Prevention System, with support from Destination Home  
San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development  
State Bar of California



Mimi and Peter Haas Fund



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



*Housing*



# DONORS & FUNDERS

Thank you to our 2025 Community of Support

## **Individual & Charitable Family Funds**

### JUSTICE CHAMPIONS (\$15,000+)

The Appel Bernstein Family Charitable Fund  
John Beem  
Shashi and Dipanjan (“DJ”) Deb  
Mary McClymont

### MOVEMENT BUILDERS (\$1,000–\$14,999)

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*\*departed in 2025*



**THANK  
YOU**

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