

**Legal Services of the Virgin Islands, Inc.  
For Presentation to the Legislature  
June 22, 2016**

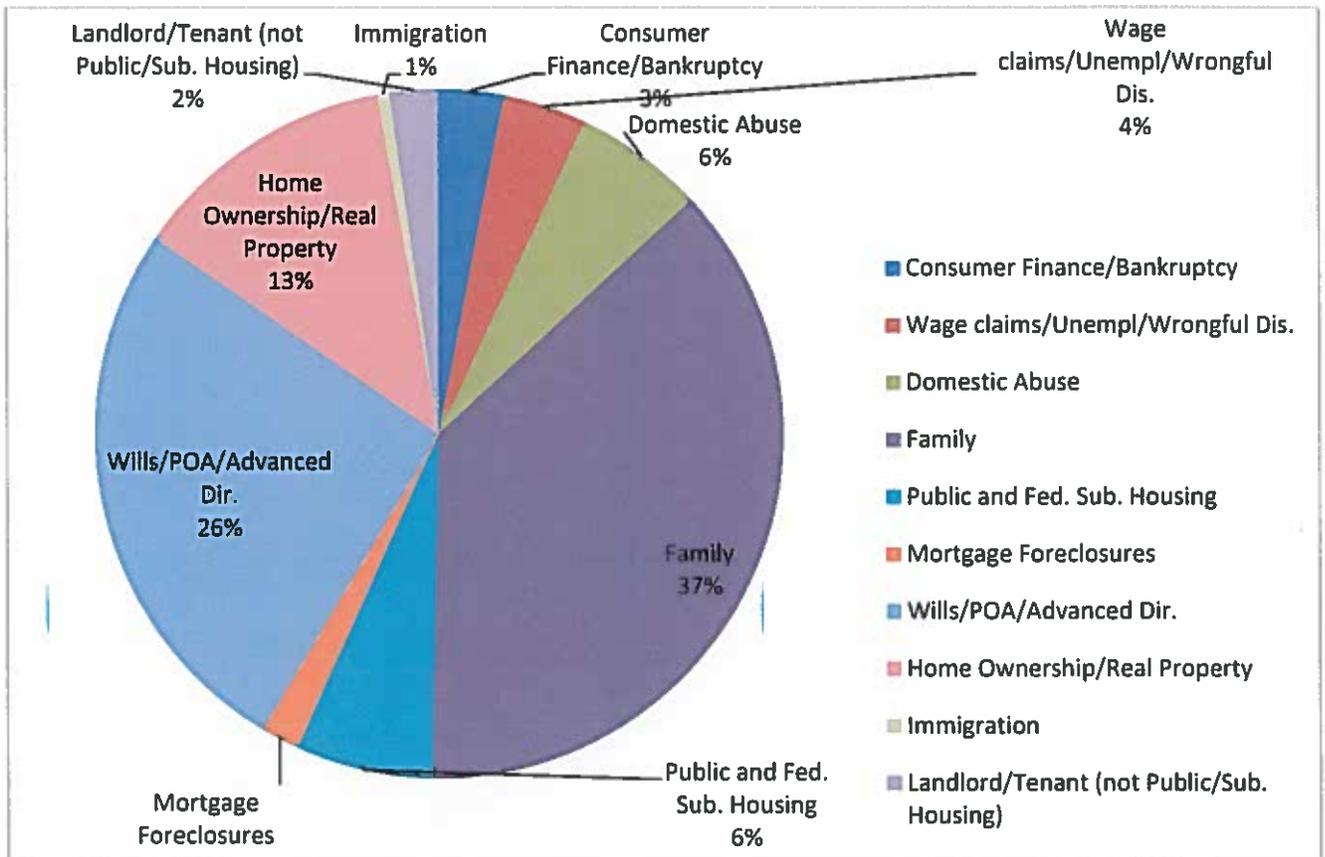
**Overview of Cases Handled**

As of December 31, 2015, Legal Services of the Virgin Islands, Inc. (LSVI) closed 1211 cases for the year as compared to 1275 for the same period 2014. The number of cases closed for the past two years are as follows:

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>St. Croix</u> | <u>St. Thomas</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 2014        | 741              | 534               | 1275         |
| 2015        | 626              | 585               | 1211         |

In comparison to the numbers for 2014 of the cases closed, the 2015 numbers represent a decline of 5%. This overall decline is due to the net loss of a case handler for eleven months that was related to the retirement of the Managing Attorney in the St. Croix office during November 2014 and whereby the full transition of a new case handler did not occur until she was specially admitted to the VI Bar in November 2015 (even though she was hired May 1, 2015).

The chart below reflect the relative comparison of the number and types of cases handled and closed by LSVI. This chart indicates that the highest percentage of cases closed was in family matters consisting primarily of divorces and custody/visitation. While the domestic abuse cases have also remained fairly consistent representing approximately 6% of the total cases closed.



These trends are expected to continue for the types of services requested. However, we have limited the acceptance of new divorce cases to only those that are associated with domestic violence, due to the lack of resources necessary to support them. Divorces require significant resources to support and are not typically like an emergency in nature, except when the person has been served with a complaint and requires our assistance to answer the complaint or fully represent them in the matter.

More importantly, we want to position ourselves to handle the types of cases that align with the priorities that will be determined through the deliberative strategic planning process expected to be completed later this year.

Also, as of December 31, 2015, LSVI opened 1212 cases, as compared to 1274 cases opened in 2014. The cases opened for the past two years are as follows:

| YEAR | <u>St. Croix</u> | <u>St. Thomas</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 2014 | 691              | 583               | 1274         |
| 2015 | 619              | 593               | 1212         |

The effect of losing a case handler is also evident by the relative number of cases opened during 2015. LSVI had opened 1212 cases as of December 31, 2015 as compared to 1274 cases as of December 31, 2014. As of April 1, 2016, LSVI has 321 open cases.

### **Community Education and Outreach**

In addition to the work on individual client cases, the case handlers have been involved in providing community education and other outreach activities. Some of the outreach activities for 2015 included:

1. Presentations to groups of residents of elderly subsidized housing communities on advanced directives and wealth transmission.
2. Presentation to groups of seniors at local churches on advanced directives and durable powers of attorney.
3. Presentation at on Restraining Orders for domestic violence and sexual assault.
4. Presentations on domestic violence in the faith based community.
5. Outreach messages and interviews on two local radio programs about Domestic Violence.
6. Presentation at Career Day Fair at high school in St. Croix.
7. Presentations to residents of public housing communities at

- Know Your Lease workshops.
8. Participation in community outreach at Senior's Day in the Legislature.
  9. Presentations on Elder Law at workshops for seniors.
  10. Presentations to Department of Human Services-Senior Citizens Affairs employees on Ethical Standards.
  11. Presentation at the Ethics School for the Virgin Islands Supreme Court.
  12. Presentation to the VI Bar Association general membership about Access to Justice.
  13. Participation as community partners with the Virgin Islands Housing Authority's Family Self Sufficiency and Resident Opportunity programs, VI Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Council's criminal justice committee and the faith-based committee, AARP and the Women's Coalition of St. Croix.

The above referenced outreach for 2015 was in addition to the time spent by the attorneys on the various non-profit boards and advisory councils. The boards and advisory councils are as follows: Virgin Islands Senior Medicare Patrol Program Advisory Council, Virgin Islands Bar Association Access to Justice Committee (chair), Virgin Islands Access to Justice Commission (Interim Chair) and the Program Coordinating Committee for the Virgin Islands Housing Authority's Family Self Sufficiency and Resident Opportunity programs.

Thus far this year (2016), some of the outreach that has been performed have included:

- Presentation to residents of the Village Partners in Recovery about, family law, domestic violence, etc.
- Participation in fair at National Guard Amory.

- Participation as community partners with the Virgin Islands Housing Authority's Family Self Sufficiency and Resident Opportunity programs, VI Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Council's criminal justice committee and the faith-based committee.
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