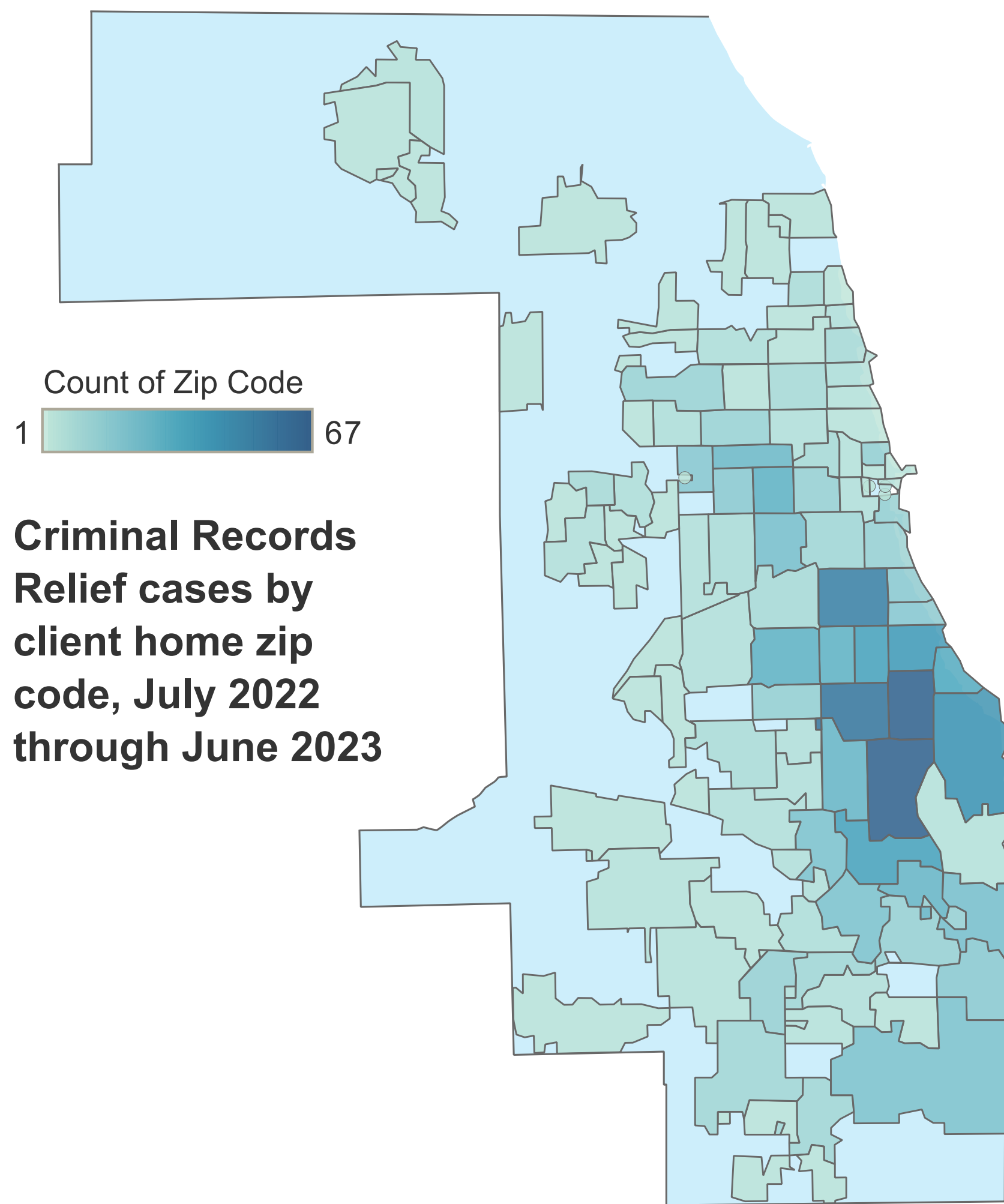


CRIMINAL RECORDS RELIEF



A criminal record can be a considerable barrier to full participation in society. For people with convictions, it is a constant challenge to lead a normal life. Every time they apply for a job, background checks are a worry. In some cases, their housing is threatened.

As a result of the so-called War on Drugs, people of color are disproportionately affected by cannabis convictions, a fundamental disenfranchisement that all too often results in estrangement within families and has many negative effects on the larger community.

GCLC has worked in criminal records clearance for over two decades.

CRIMINAL RECORDS RELIEF CLIENTS



2002
Clinic attorneys began drafting clemency petitions for clients with convictions. At the time, there was no Illinois law allowing for sealing of convictions.

2004
The Criminal Identification Act passed, allowing the sealing of non-violent misdemeanors in Illinois.

2005
The Clinic establishes the Ex-Offender Advocacy Program, which grew into the Criminal Records Relief program.

2010
The Clinic establishes the Expungement and Sealing Live Call Project, a weekly pro bono help desk, in which Clinic attorneys and attorney volunteers assist pro se litigants with objections to their expungement or sealing case on that court date.

2019
The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act passed, legalizing the sale of cannabis in Illinois. The Act also established a fund—from taxes on cannabis sales—to create a means to reverse cannabis-related misdemeanor convictions. This provision was included to ensure fairness and equity and promote economic and social justice.

2020
New Leaf Illinois launched. A statewide alliance of service organizations—including GCLC—New Leaf supports legal aid programs that provide free legal representation to low-income people, assisting with motions to vacate and expunge certain types of cannabis criminal records.

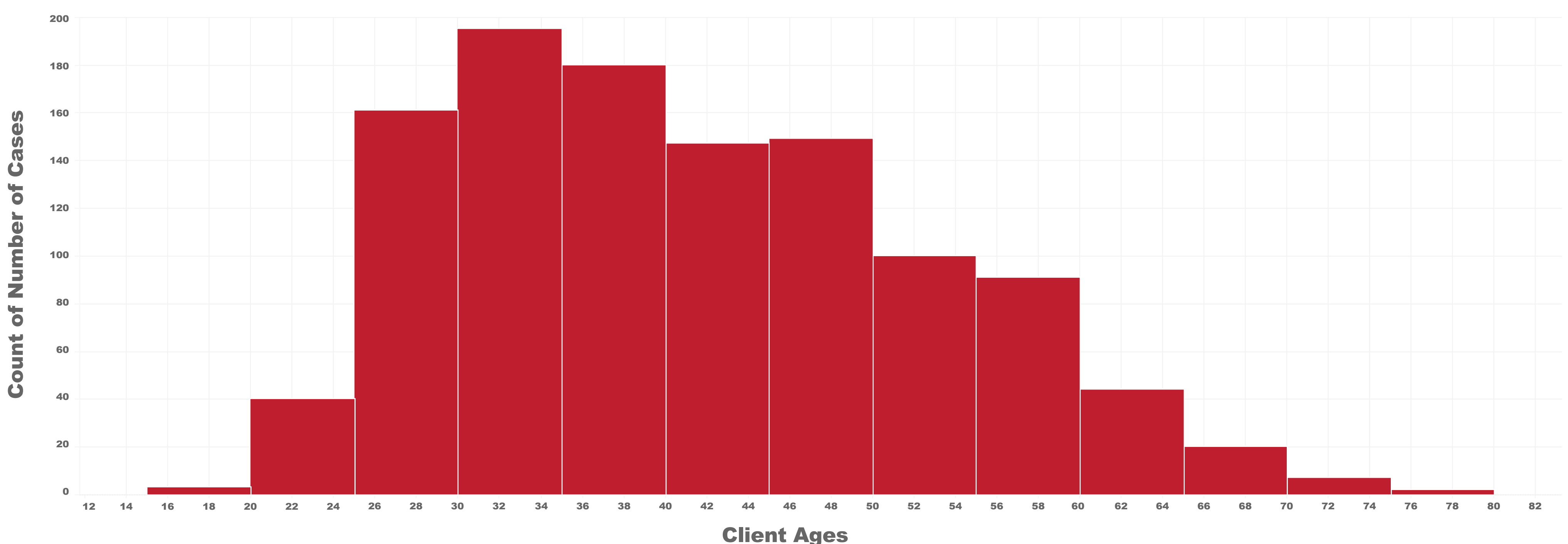
Job applicants without a criminal record are 60% more likely to get a call back from potential employers. 64% of unemployed 35-year-old men have a criminal record.

— CNBC News, 2022

“The New Leaf Illinois program [works] to restore communities who’ve been hit hardest by the war on drugs, reinvest in individuals who continue to be unfairly punished by past convictions, and include everyone, especially those who have been historically marginalized and shut out.”

— Illinois Representative Kelly Cassidy

CLIENT AGE AT INTAKE



ECONOMIC STABILITY

Many individuals and families in Greater Chicago lack the economic stability they need to face the challenges that life presents, from a disability that leaves them unable to work to a costly contract dispute. GLCC attorneys provide resources and services that help clients overcome these hurdles and create financial stability for them and their family.

Social Security Disability and SSI Disability Initial Claims, Reconsiderations and Appeals

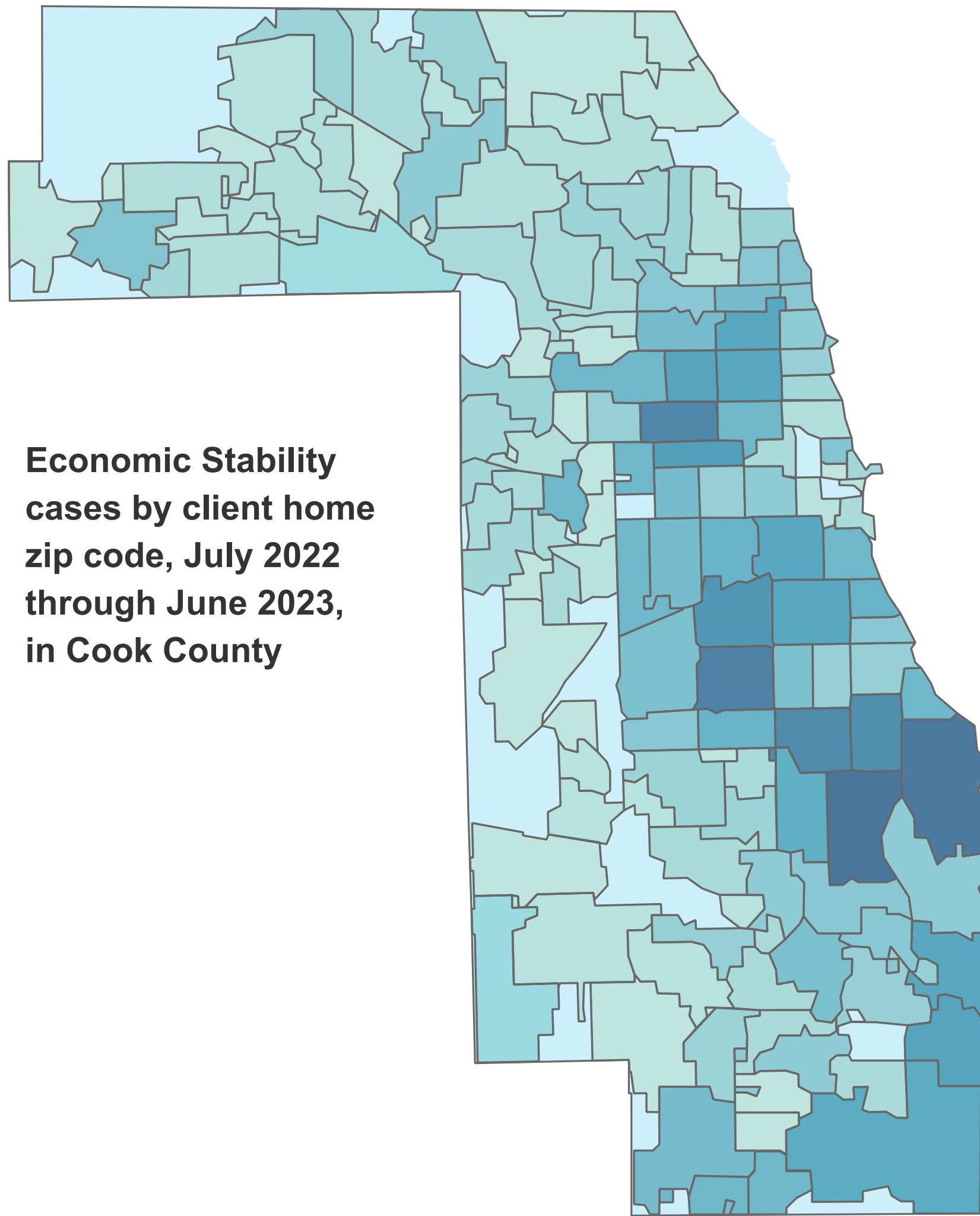
Approximately 70% of initial Social Security Disability and SSI Disability claims are denied. Clinic attorneys assist with the initial filing of disability claims as well as the reconsideration and appeals processes, including representing adults and children in hearings before Administrative Law Judges of the Social Security Administration's Office of Hearings Operations.

Early Resolution Program

Part of the county-wide collaborative partnership Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt (CCLAHD) is the Early Resolution Program, through which GCLC attorneys assist Cook County residents resolve consumer debt issues.

Municipal Advice Desk Referral Project

If a consumer debt issue requires extended representation, it can be referred for service to another GCLC initiative: the Municipal Advice Desk Referral Project, a.k.a., the Muni Desk. Through the Muni Desk, GCLC attorneys provide representation to low-income people facing consumer debt matters, including identity theft, and contract disputes.



Economic Stability cases by client home zip code, July 2022 through June 2023, in Cook County

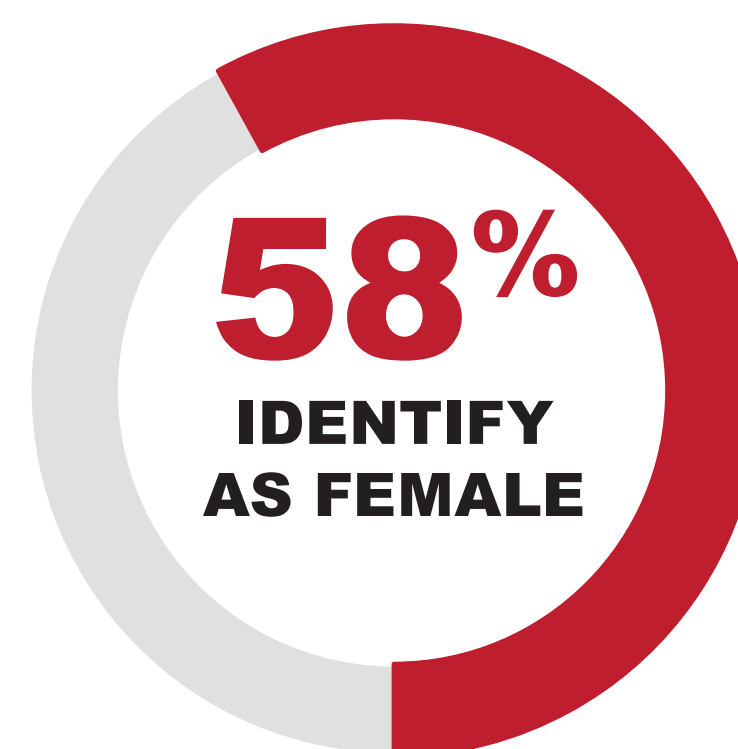


Our attorney went beyond her job to help us out. She was so respectful and helpful to us. I just want to say thank you so much!

– GCLC Client



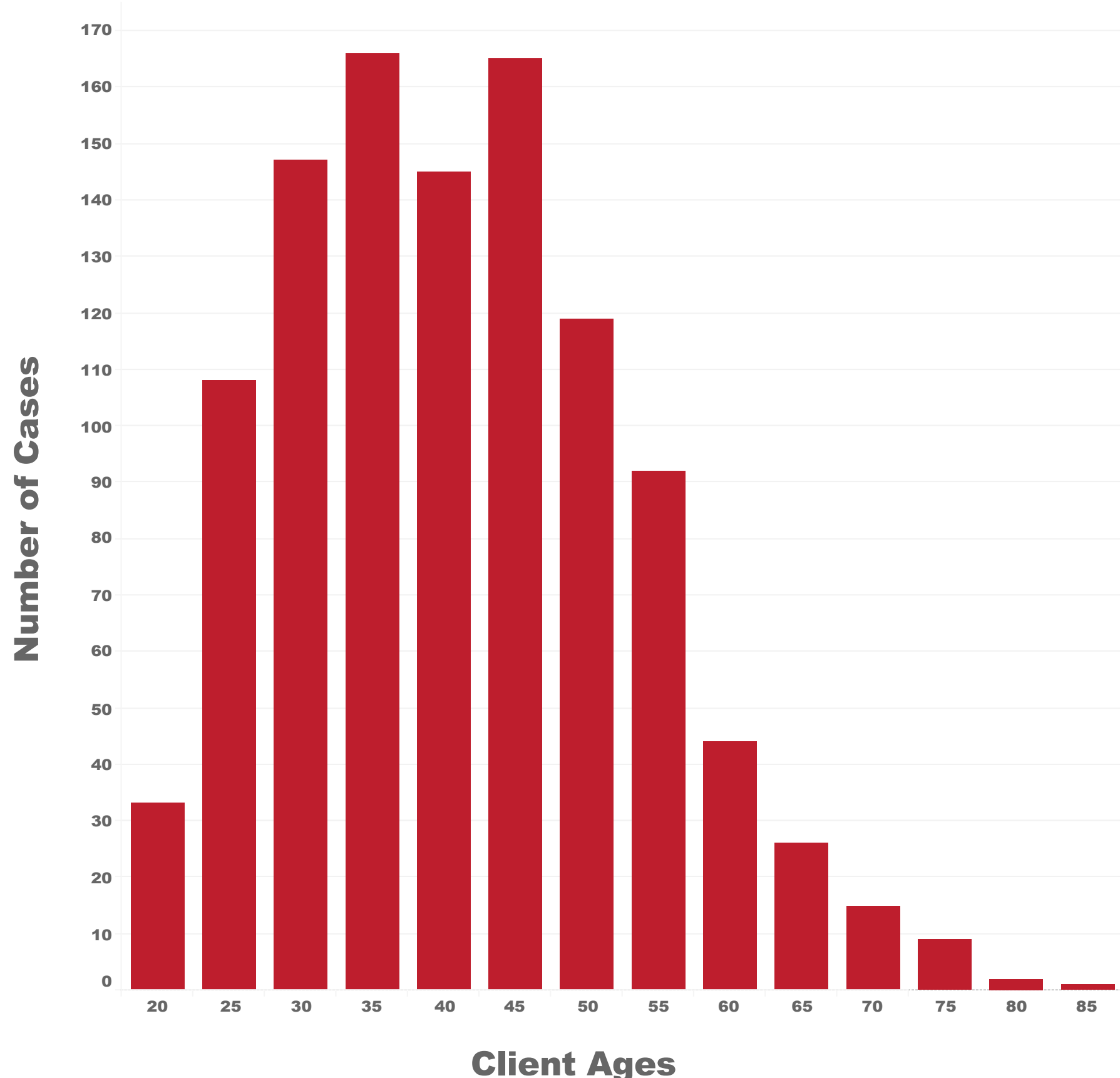
ECONOMIC STABILITY CLIENTS



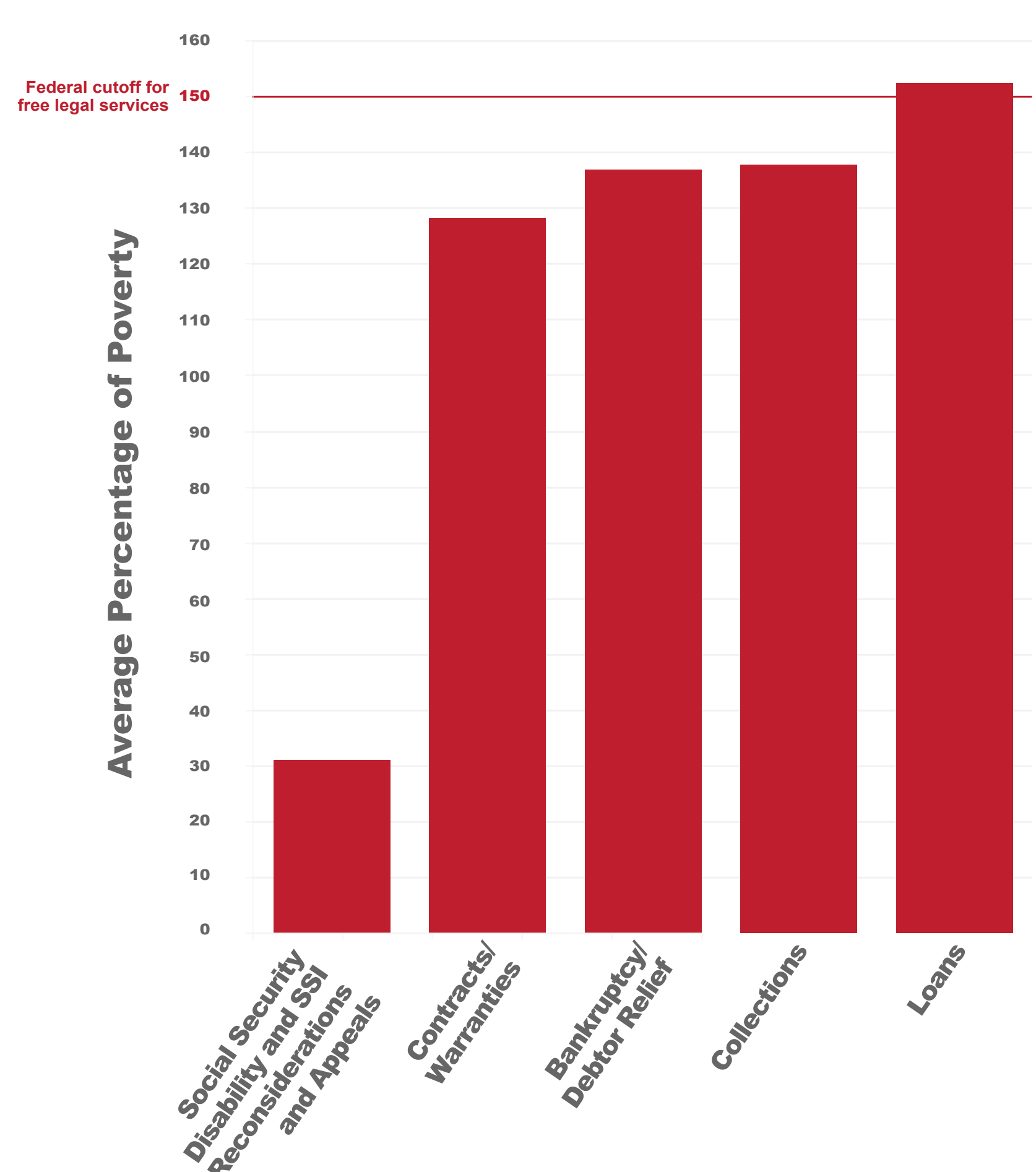
I only had to explain things to [my attorney] once, even though there were lots of details to my issue. He understood my position immediately, informed me of the law, and went right to work. He was very responsive and extremely professional. Without his assistance the opposing side would have continued to disregard me and take advantage of me. I am tremendously grateful. – GCLC Client



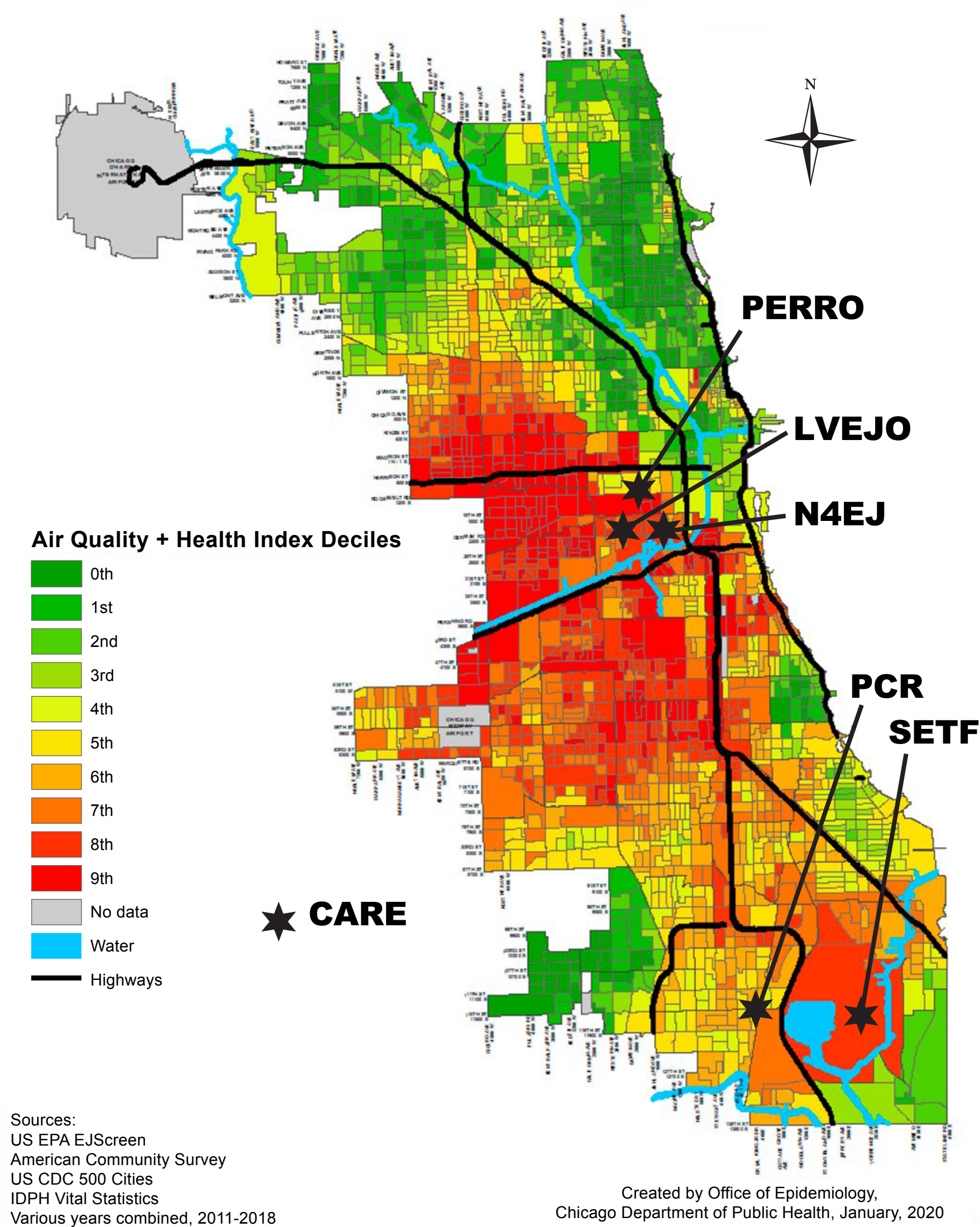
CLIENT AGE AT INTAKE



CLIENT INCOME



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW PROGRAM



The Environmental Law Program serves clients advocating for some of Chicago's most vulnerable environmental justice communities and surrounding suburbs. As marked in the Air Quality and Health Index Map of Chicago, you can see our clients within communities highly impacted by air pollution.

LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION (LVEJO)
The mission of LVEJO is to organize with our community to accomplish environmental justice in Little Village and achieve the self-determination of immigrant, low-income, and working-class families¹.

NEIGHBORS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (N4EJ)
We believe environmental justice cannot be separated from racial justice, and so we align and advocate to support the larger struggle for justice in all the forms it takes².

SOUTHEAST ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE (SETF)
We believe that southeast Chicagoland will one day serve as a national and international model for the integration of industrial, residential and natural areas into a productive, green, and environmentally sustainable urban community³.

PEOPLE FOR COMMUNITY RECOVERY (PCR)
PCR prioritizes residents of public housing and EJ communities in our staff, board and membership. Our grassroots model is community-led, and we value community leadership development, transparent decision making, and community-led campaigns⁴.

CITIZENS AGAINST RUINING THE ENVIRONMENT (CARE)
The Greater Chicago Legal Clinic is assisting with CARE's opposition to a limestone quarry expansion in Romeoville, Illinois, a project proposed by Hanson Material Service⁵.

PILSEN ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND REFORM ORGANIZATION (PERRO)
PERRO believes all people have the right to live in a clean and healthy environment, regardless of their race and class. Its mission is to spread awareness about this concept of environmental justice and make Pilsen a healthier place to live, work, and raise children⁶.

- Citations**
- 1 lvejo.org
 - 2 n4ej.org
 - 3 setaforce.org
 - 4 peopleforcommunityrecovery.org
 - 5 willcountycare.org
 - 6 pilsenperro.org

Through legal education and advocacy services in Greater Chicago, GCLC's Environmental Law Program enables people confronting urban environmental problems to have equal access to justice. The Clinic represents clients in rulemaking, permitting, site remediation, and enforcement cases on the local, state, and federal levels.

The Environmental Law Program was established in 1989, initiating one of the nation's first full-time environmental poverty law programs. In 1999, the program established a clinic partnership with Chicago-Kent College of Law. The creation of the Chicago Environmental Law Clinic has enabled an exponential increase in environmental legal services to clients while also providing students with a clinical service learning experience.

A RECENT COMMUNITY WIN



In May, GCLC completed a comprehensive settlement of the 2020 civil rights complaint we filed on behalf of the Southeast Environmental Task Force and People for Community Recovery. The Complaint was based on a triggering event - the City's commitment to cooperate with a proposal to move a metal shredding operation from a gentrifying area near Lincoln Park to a low-income and minority community on the southeast side. Just as importantly, the Complaint alleged this event evidenced a longstanding pattern of discriminatory land use and permitting decisions in Chicago.

HUD's acceptance and investigation of the Complaint was a catalyst for the City's 2022 decision to deny an operating permit for the relocated metal shredder. It has not operated. Also in 2022, HUD issued a Letter of Findings affirming the central claims in the civil rights Complaint regarding broader patterns of discrimination in the City's land use and permitting practices.

In May, a settlement was reached in which Mayor Lightfoot issued an Executive Order acknowledging Chicago's long history of discriminatory conduct and mandating a slate of reforms for multiple City Departments. Many of these reforms were put into motion while settlement negotiations proceeded.

More importantly, HUD, the City and Complainants entered into an enforceable Voluntary Compliance Agreement with a slate of comprehensive, detailed reforms to remedy this systemic discrimination and its impact on the health, safety and welfare of environmental justice communities.

There has been coverage of this case by the Sun-Times* and it has been extensively covered by the Chicago Tribune and Block Club Chicago. The Sun-Times Editorial Board endorsed the Executive Order and Voluntary Compliance Agreement**.

The Johnson Administration is now building on this foundational work, while at the same time advancing additional measures and new directions. GCLC and its clients will be front-and-center as the reforms are implemented. These reforms include developing a new cumulative impacts assessment tool, a cumulative impacts Ordinance and department-by-department environmental justice strategies.

* Chicago, HUD settle environmental racism case as Lori Lightfoot leaves office, Chicago Sun Times (May 12, 2023)

** It's good news that city will have to clean up its act for putting polluters in minority neighborhoods, Chicago Sun Times (May 15, 2023)

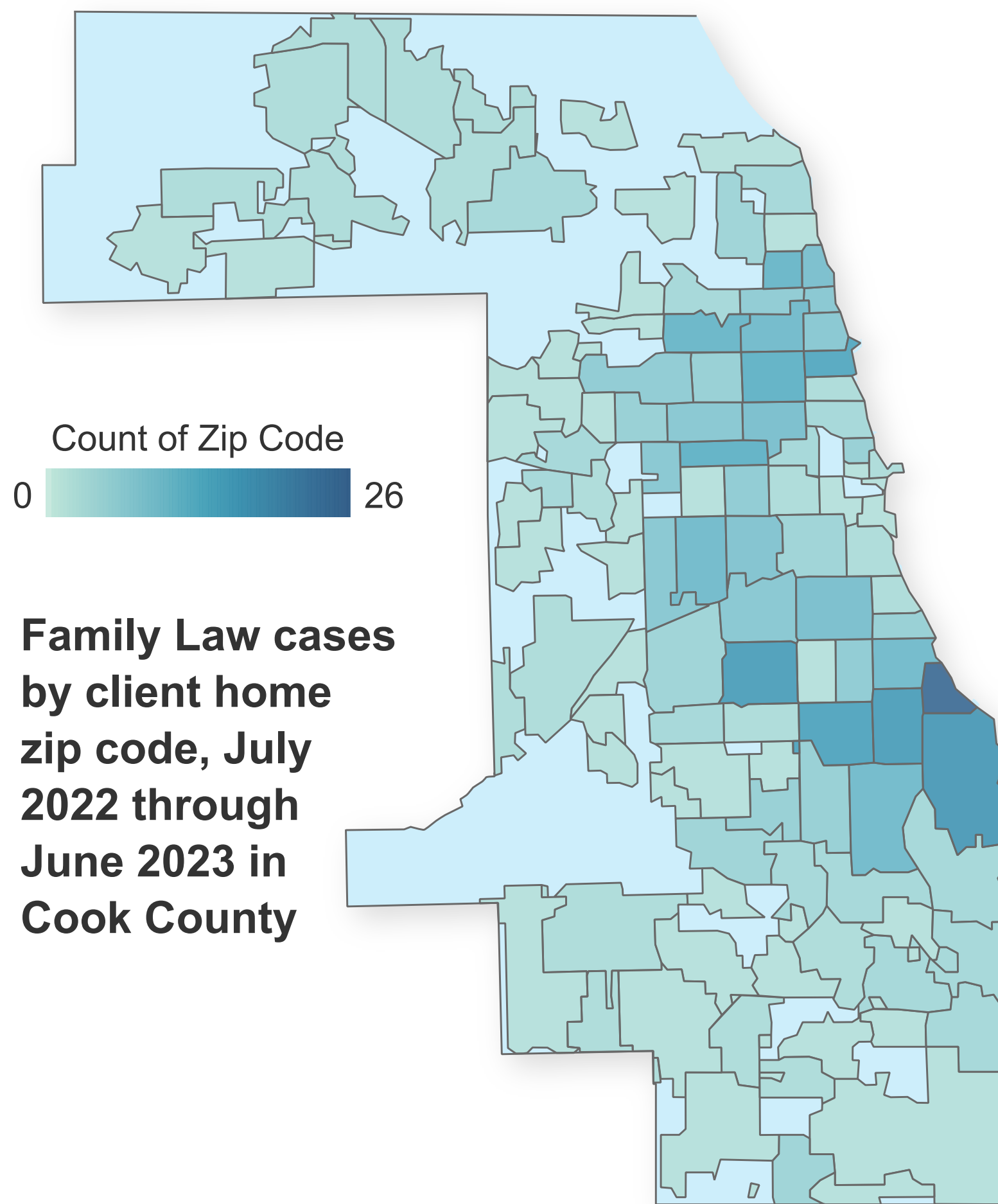
FAMILY LAW

GCLC celebrates the fundamental role that families—of every size and variety—play in the strength and vitality of our communities. We also understand the legal challenges that can arise from families in crisis.

Family Law attorneys help people rebuild their lives following domestic or intimate partner violence. They help self-represented litigants with issues related to paternity and child support. They help with divorce, child custody, supervised parenting time, and parenting plans, as well as adoptions.

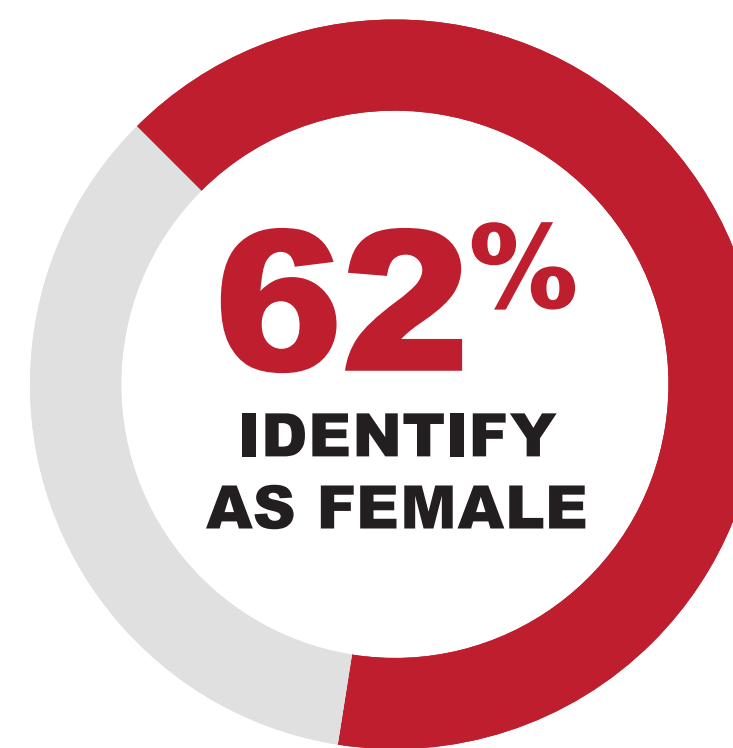
The vast majority of Family Law clients are members of historically disinvested or marginalized communities.

FAMILY LAW CLIENTS

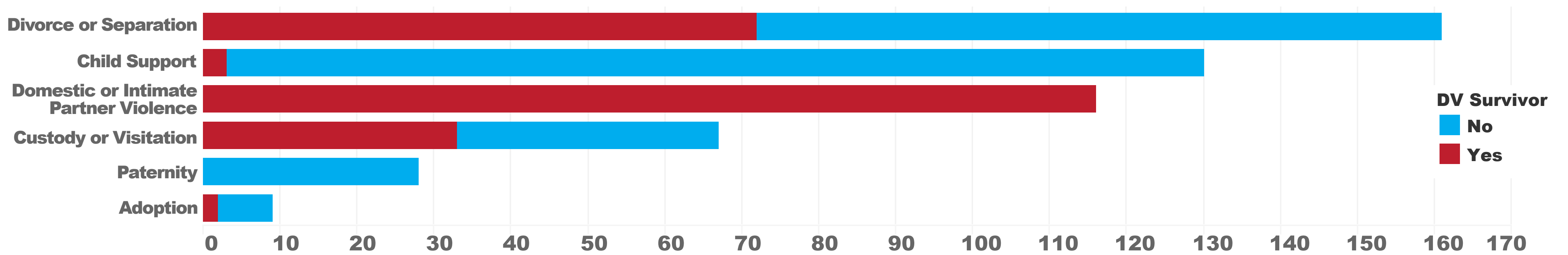


Domestic violence survivors represented by an attorney are 2.5x more likely to be successful in obtaining a protective order than those who do not have lawyers.

– 2022 Investing in Justice Campaign, Chicago Bar Foundation



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS BY CASE TYPE



44% of Family Law clients identify as survivors of domestic violence.

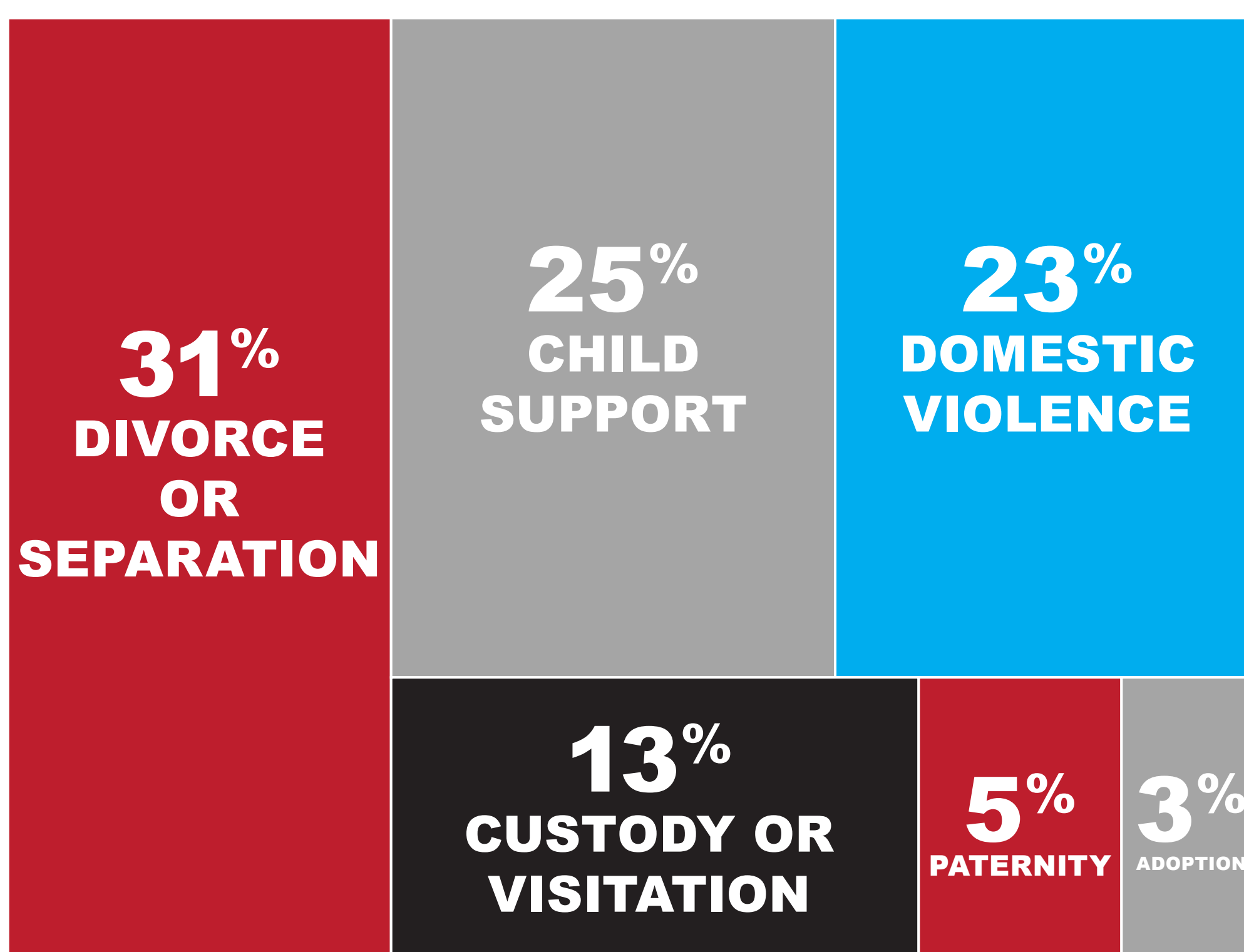


Thank you for treating me with such respect and dignity when you were defending me. It might have seemed trivial, but it meant the world for both me and my daughter. Thank you for your knowledge, your professionalism, and most importantly—your kindness. Not only do you have an amazing brain, but also an amazing heart.

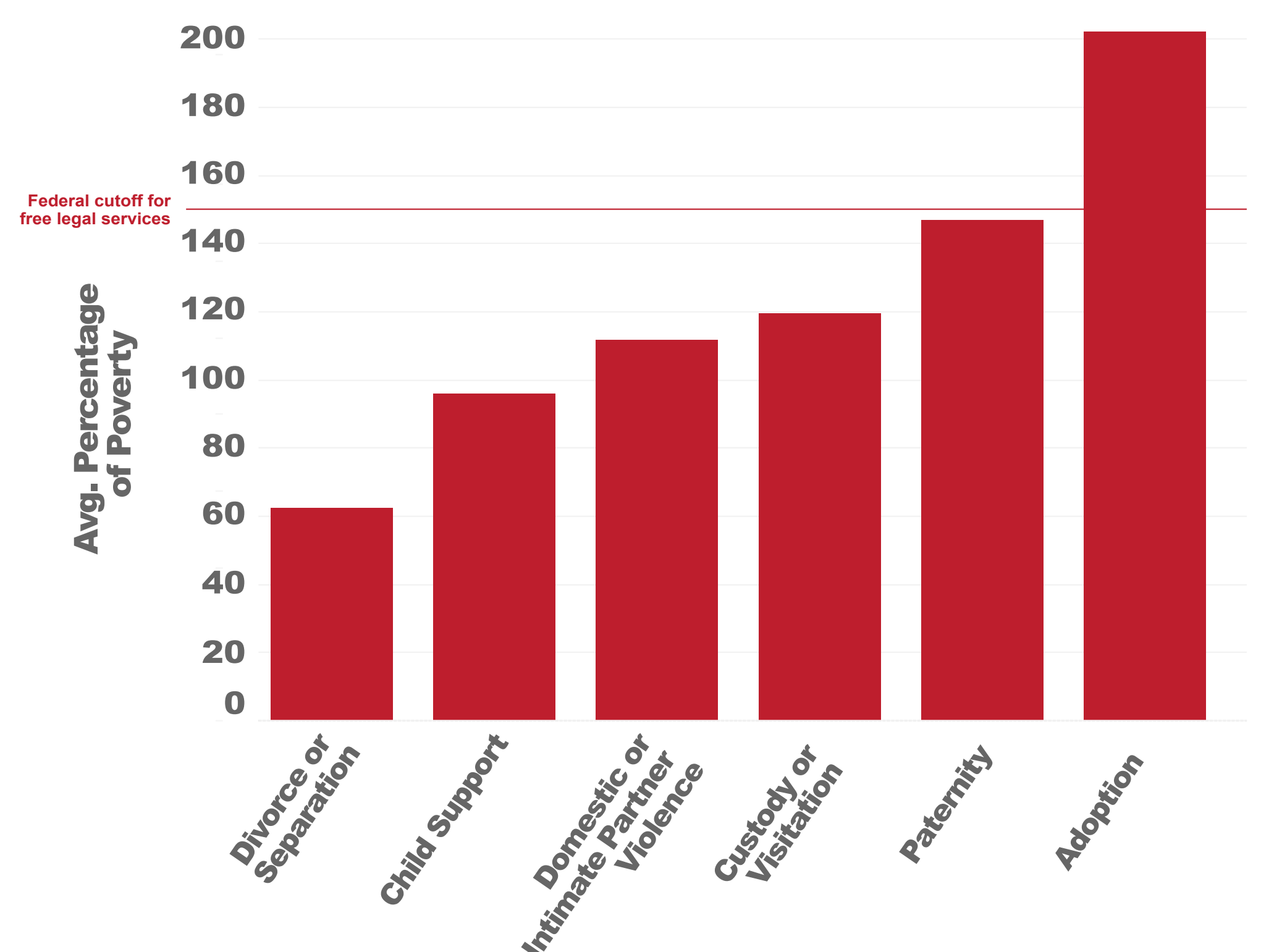


– Domestic Violence Survivor and GCLC Family Law Client

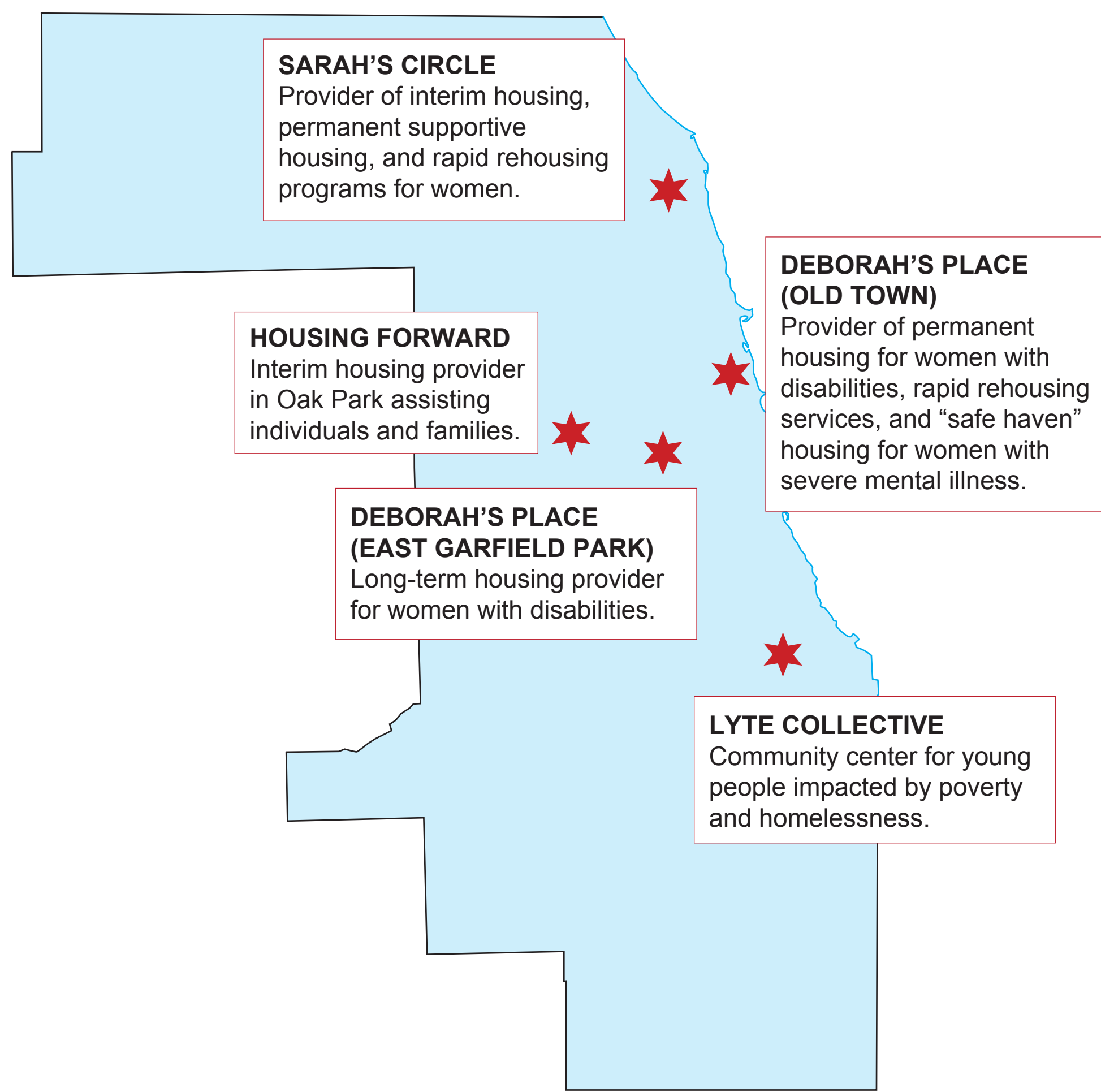
CASES BY CATEGORY OF LAW



CLIENT INCOME



HOMELESSNESS ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION PROGRAM



Because legal issues are too often among the types of problems faced by people experiencing housing crisis—including its most extreme example, homelessness—the Homelessness Advice and Representation Program (HARP) provides accessible legal aid services to individuals and families in interim housing arrangements.

HARP is a collaboration between Greater Chicago Legal Clinic and select Chicagoland housing services providers. GCLC attorneys provide free, on-site legal aid clinics as part of the partner organization's wraparound services model.

HARP CLIENTS



Over 65,000 Chicagoans are currently experiencing homelessness [defined as "sheltered, unsheltered, and people temporarily staying with others due to a loss of housing"] including 18,535 children under the age of 18.

— Illinois State of Homelessness Report, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (2022)

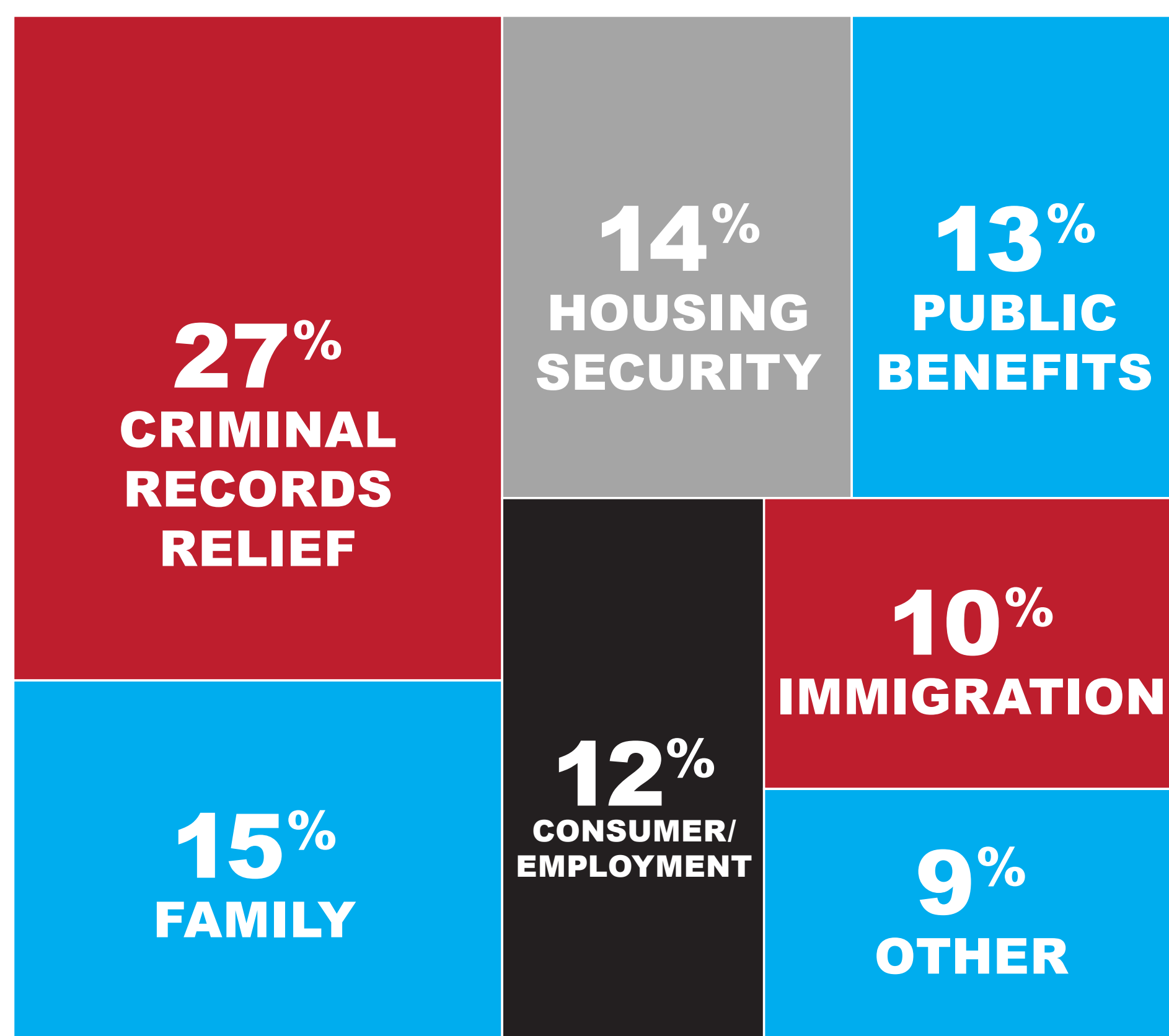


I've been fortunate to connect women from Deborah's Place who are in need of legal services with HARP over the past year and a half. Since 1987, I've been providing referrals to other free legal services here at Deborah's Place. Most of our participants are not able to navigate leaving our building, or successfully showing up on time or in the right place. Having HARP come on site is a game changer. Adam, Ariel, Jeff, and Katie have been able to create trust in their work here. Trust for our participants is rare and hard won.

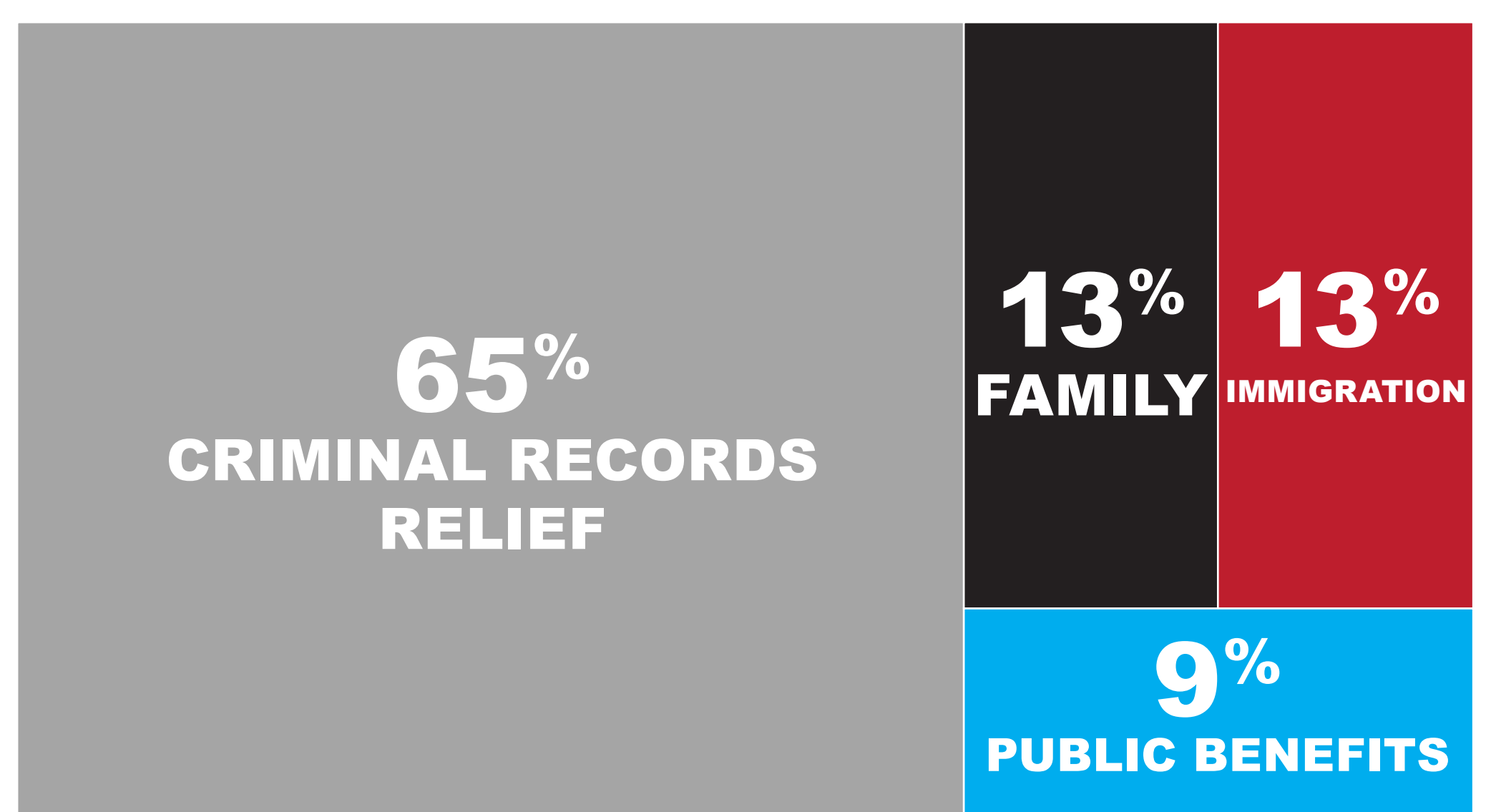
— Jean Durkin, Learning Center Coordinator at Deborah's Place



BRIEF SERVICES* BY CATEGORY OF LAW



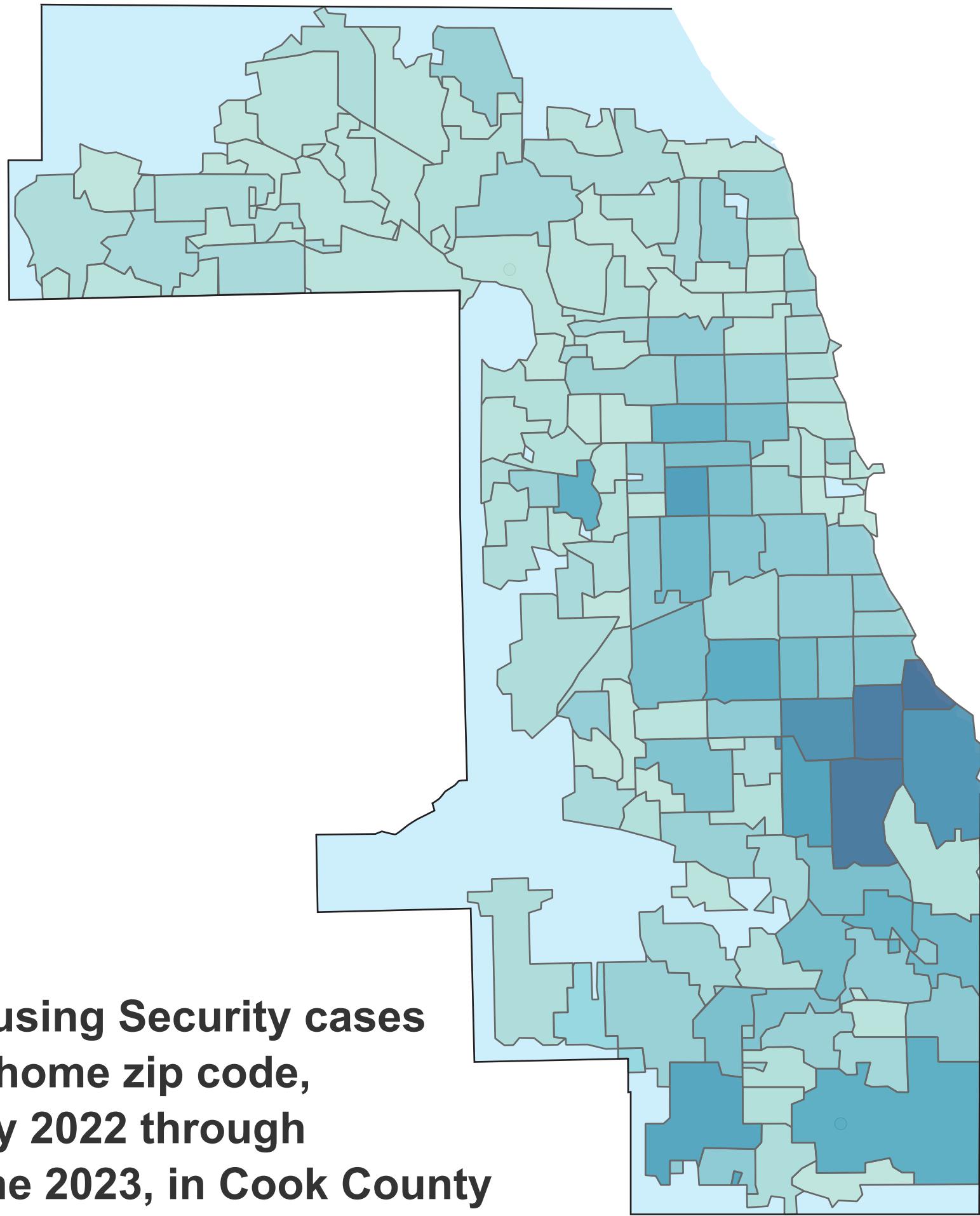
EXTENDED REPRESENTATION* BY CATEGORY OF LAW



* Most HARP cases are brief services, for example: advice, counsel, and assistance with simple legal documents.

* Some HARP cases require extended representation, for example: in hearings before an administrative agency, in negotiations with third parties, or in court proceedings.

HOUSING SECURITY



Housing Security cases by home zip code, July 2022 through June 2023, in Cook County

Greater Chicago Legal Clinic’s Housing Security practice has been assisting low-income Chicagoans for decades. Because of this depth of experience, GCLC was tapped for a new initiative in 2020, the Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt (CCLAHD) program, a county-wide collaborative partnership established to address housing and economic insecurity issues.

Through CCLAHD’s **Early Resolution Program**, Clinic attorneys assist Cook County residents resolve eviction and debt issues.

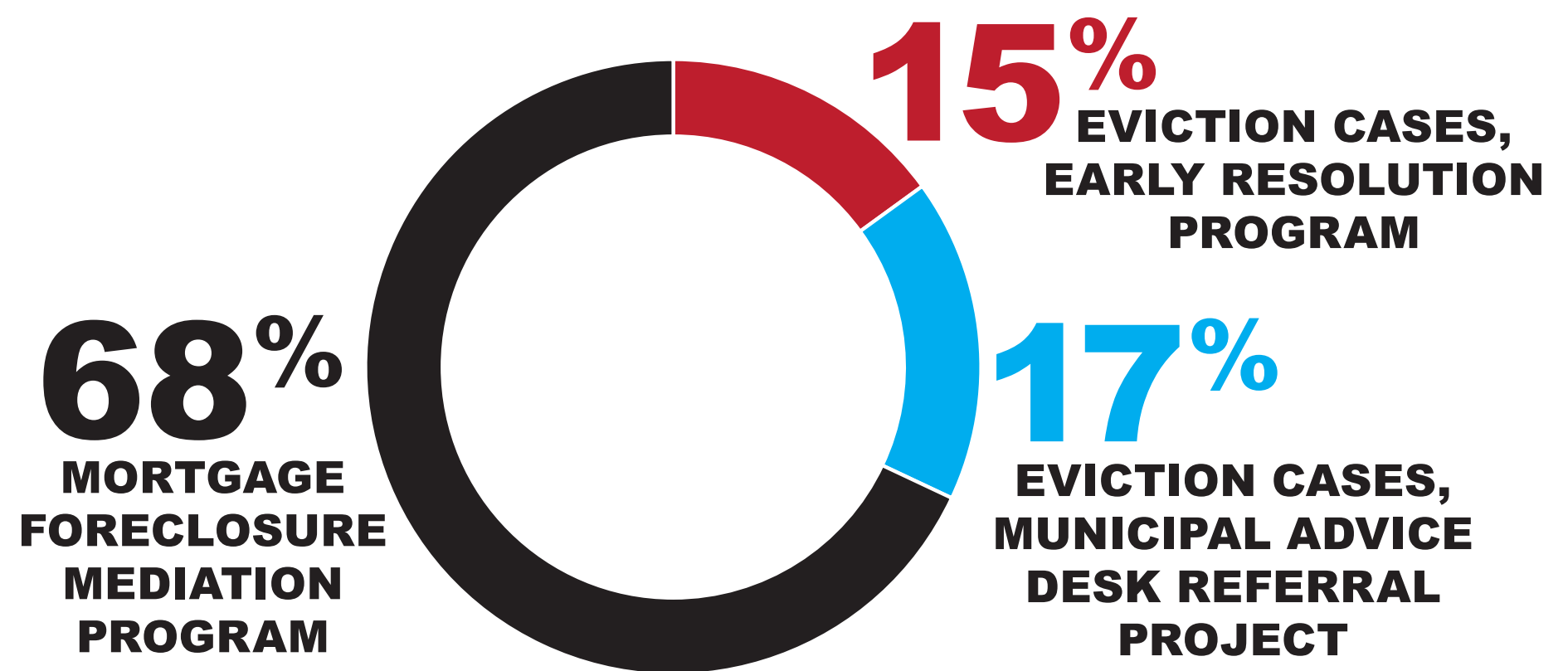
Through the **Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program**, Clinic attorneys provide advice, counsel, negotiation, and mediation services to Cook County residents facing home foreclosure.

The **Municipal Advice Desk Referral Project**—the Muni Desk, as it is affectionately known around the office—has, for nearly twenty years, served as an important resource for clients whose landlord/tenant and consumer debt cases require extended representation.

HOUSING SECURITY CASES

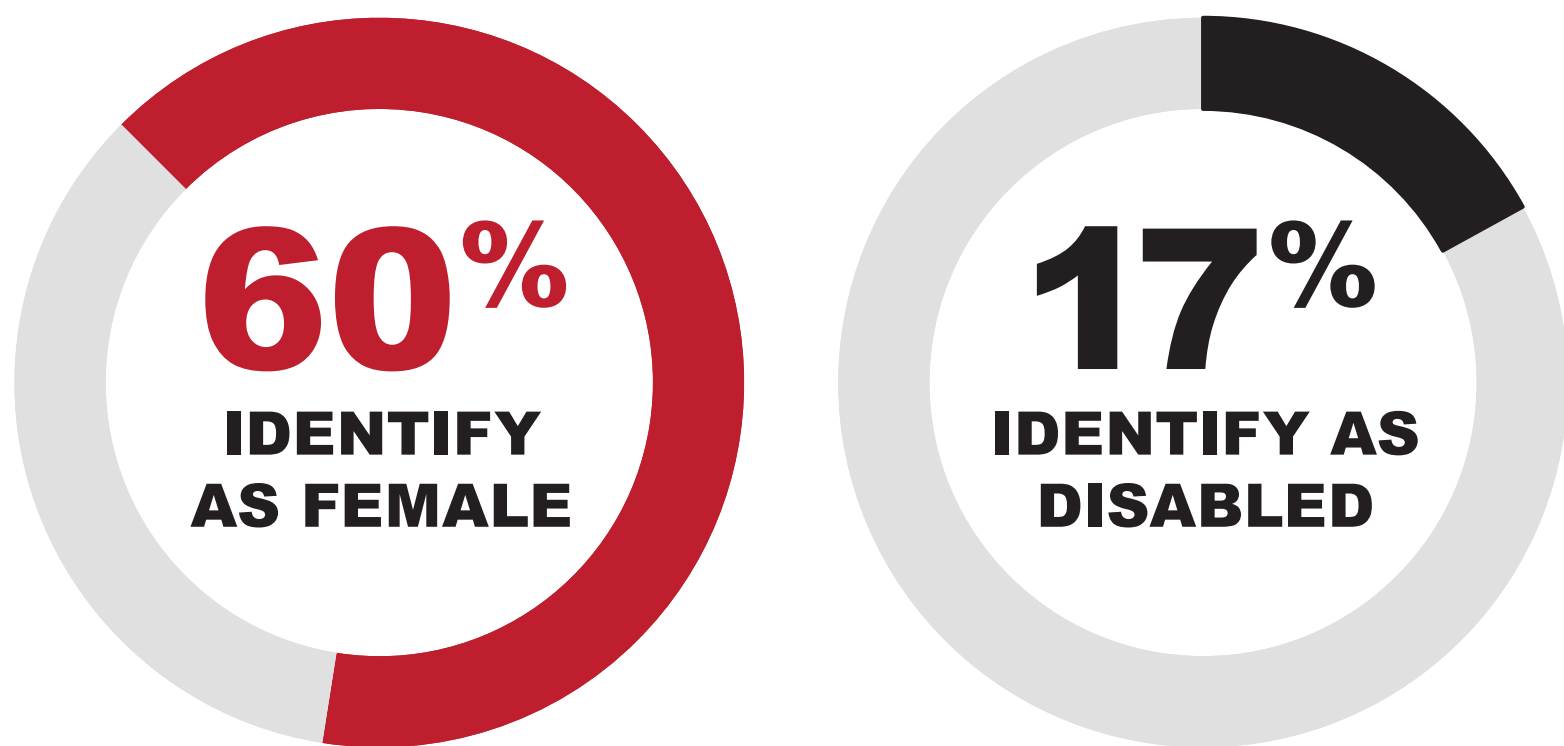
92,350 households in Cook County are currently behind on their rent and are now at risk of eviction. 71,000 children live in these households.

– National Equity Atlas [nationalequityatlas.org]

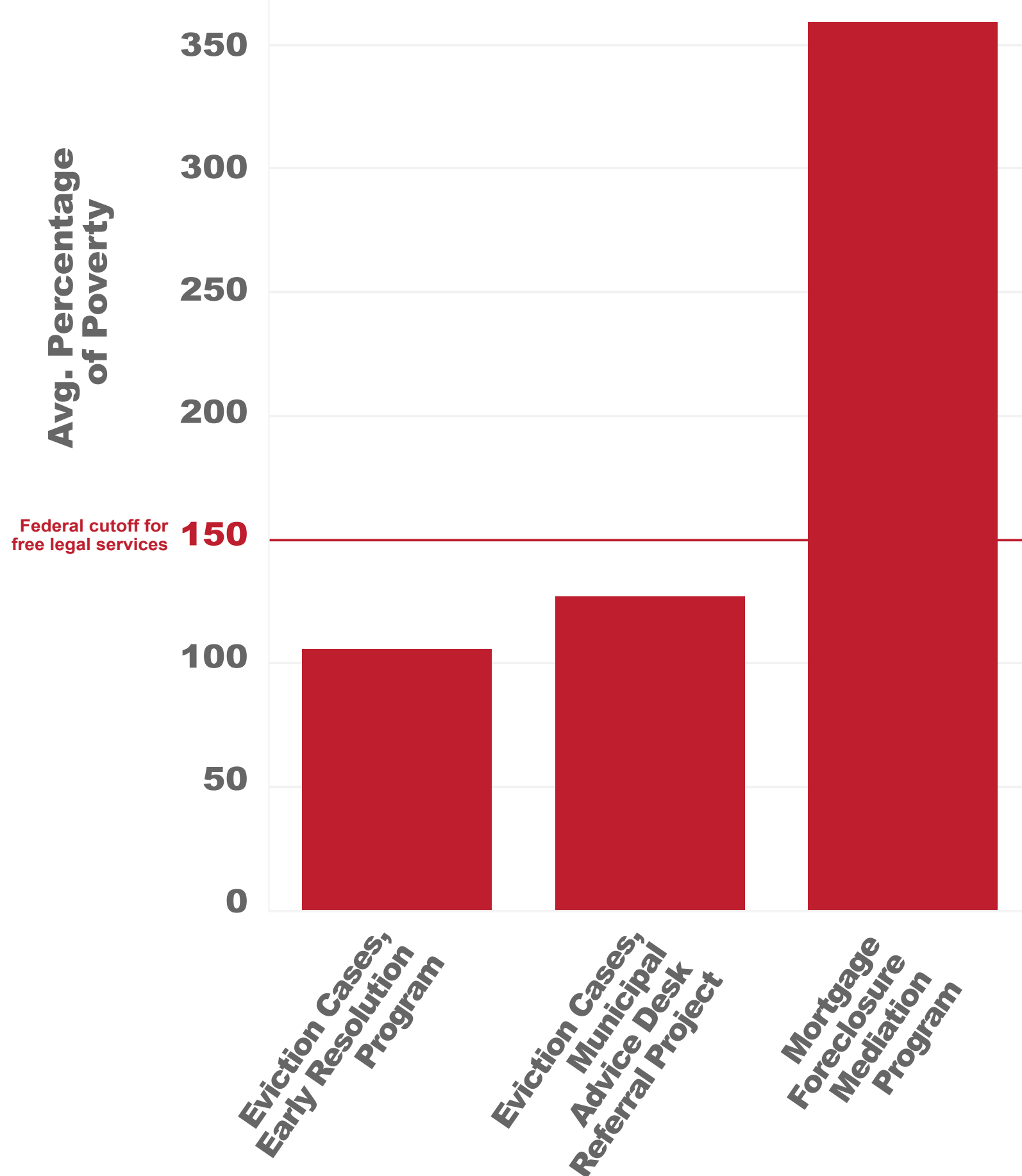


July 2022 through June 2023 Percentage by Program

HOUSING SECURITY CLIENTS



CLIENT INCOME



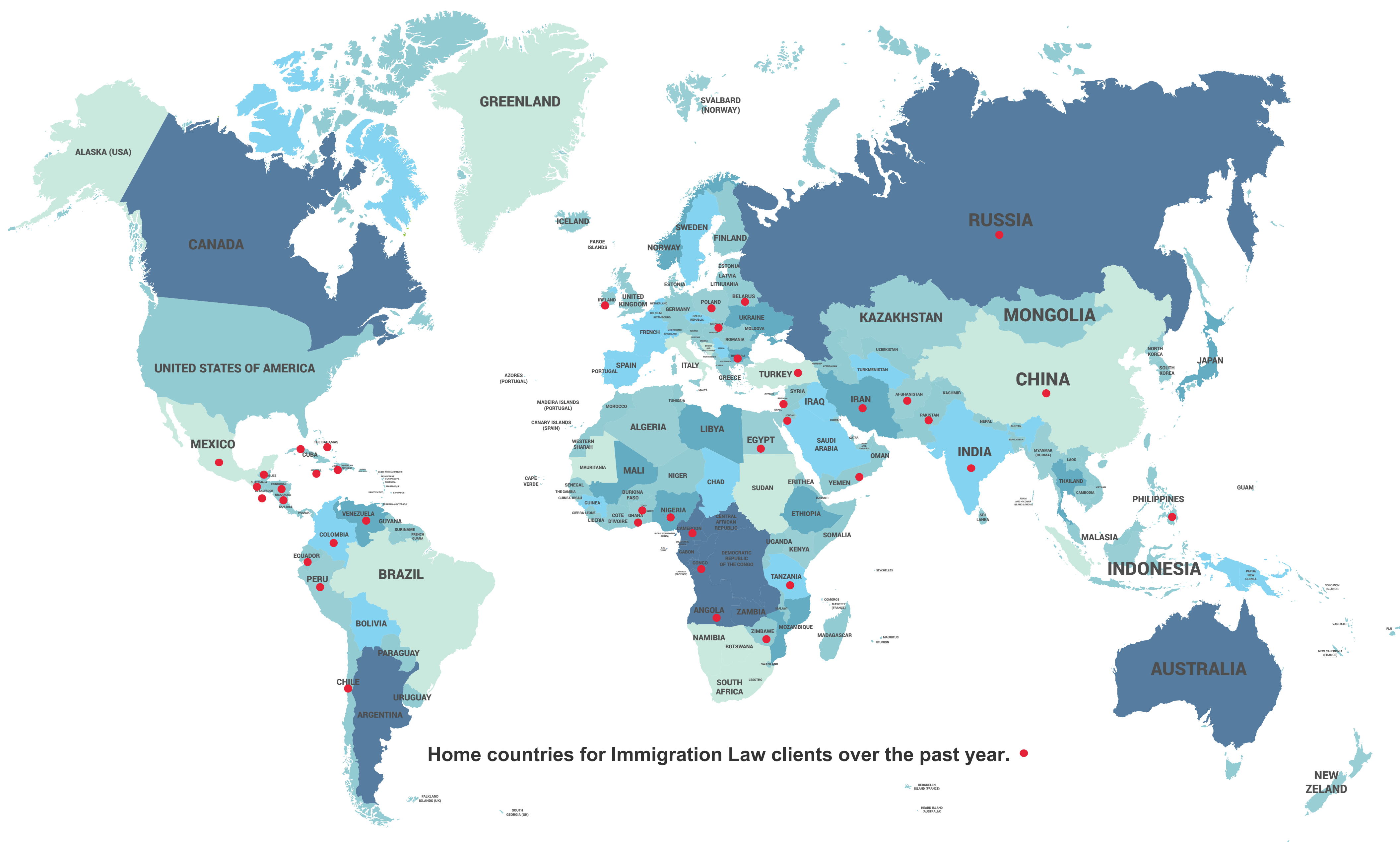
My son was robbed and shot. He was killed instantly. I went crazy...it was really tough. I fell behind [on my rent] without even noticing. The management company called me and I told them what happened. I hoped they would give me time to find the money and pay, but [instead] they gave me a 30-day [eviction] notice. I really panicked. I ran to City Hall...eventually, I got connected with my GCLC lawyer.

He took my case and walked me through everything. He is amazing! Every day I talked to him I would cry. I would break down, and he would just listen to me and comfort me...We did the court in Zoom, and I could see a lot of people didn’t have a lawyer like I had. I was so lucky to have my lawyer! Eventually he called me and said, ‘Guess what? The management company wants you to stay.’ I can’t tell you how happy that made me.

– GCLC Housing Security Client



IMMIGRATION LAW



Immigration law has been central to the Clinic’s work since its founding in 1981. GCLC attorneys are committed to pursuing fundamental human rights for immigrants.

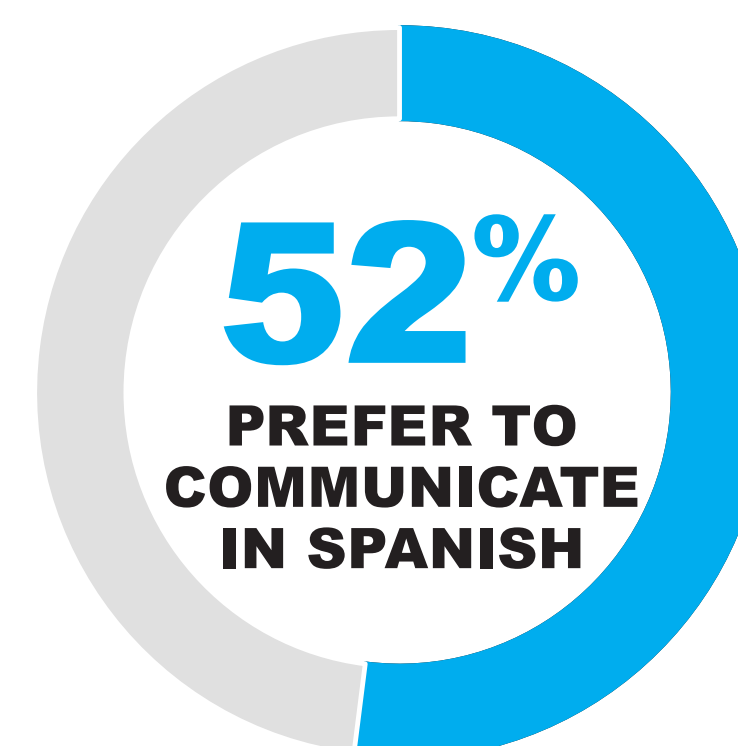
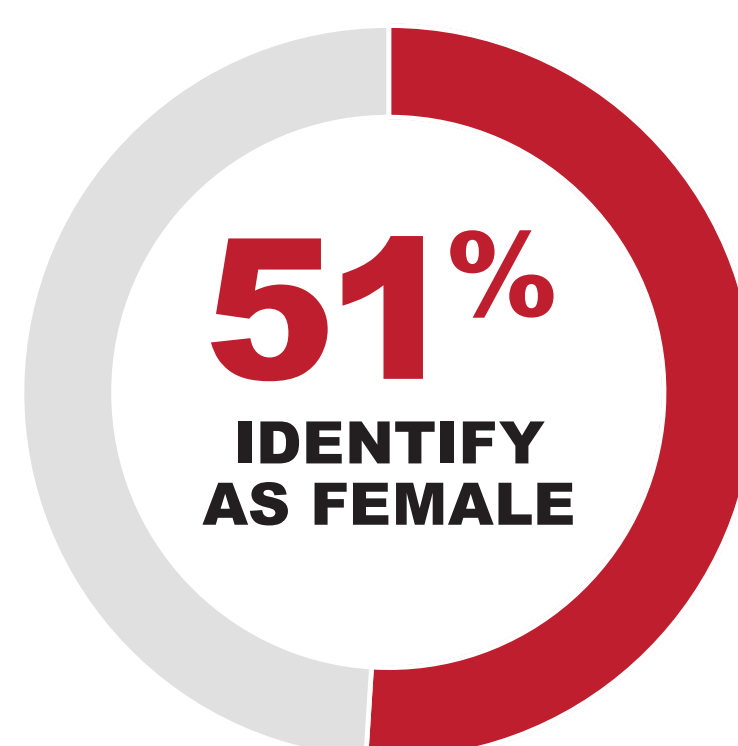
Clinic attorneys specialize in family-based immigration, including advocating for survivors of domestic violence, preparing waivers, fiancée petitions, removal of marriage-based conditions on permanent resident cards, and renewal of cards. They also handle a wide range of other cases, including asylum, Special Immigrant Visas for Afghans, temporary protected status, deportation defense, representing crime victims who assist law enforcement, consular processing, and naturalization.

Immigration clients speak many languages—American Sign Language, Arabic, Mandarin, Dari, Farsi, French, Pashto, Polish, and Russian, among others—with Spanish being the most common.

Only 37% of all immigrants in the United States have representation in court. But non-detained immigrants with representation are up to five times more likely to win their court case than those without attorneys.

– *Access to Counsel*, National Immigrant Justice Center

IMMIGRATION LAW CLIENTS



I got my green card at 8:30 pm tonight! I am so relieved and happy! Thank you so much for all the tremendous help and support you gave me throughout this tough uncertain time. I’m grateful I had you as an attorney. You’re a miracle.

– GCLC Immigration Law Client

