



Access to legal services is essential to ensure equal access and protection under the law for all individuals, regardless of their financial status. However, for many Americans who cannot afford to pay for legal representation, this access is limited or non-existent. This can have a detrimental effect on their lives and well-being, as well as on the fairness and integrity of the legal system as a whole.

According to a 2020 report by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), a government-funded organization that provides civil legal aid to low-income Americans, over 86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans in the past year received inadequate or no legal help. The report further states that the justice gap (the difference between the civil legal needs of low-income Americans and the resources available to address them) remains a significant problem, with only one legal aid attorney available for every 10,000 people living in poverty.

In terms of income brackets, Americans who fall below the federal poverty line (currently set at \$12,880 for an individual and \$26,500 for a family of four) are the most vulnerable when it comes to accessing legal services. However, even those who earn slightly above this threshold may still struggle to afford legal representation. According to the American Bar Association, the average hourly rate for a lawyer in the United States is \$250-\$520, with some attorneys charging as much as \$1,000 per hour.

In contrast, Americans who earn higher incomes generally have greater access to legal services. According to a 2019 study by the Pew Research Center, only 1% of households earning over \$100,000 per year reported experiencing a legal problem in the past year that they could not afford to address. In comparison, 23% of households earning less than \$40,000 per year reported the same.

In conclusion, the lack of access to legal services for low-income Americans is a significant problem that can have a lasting impact on their lives and the legal system as a whole. It is essential to ensure that all individuals have access to legal representation and protection under the law, regardless of their financial status.