

# 2022-23 Virtual Legal Clinic Report

## Program Description

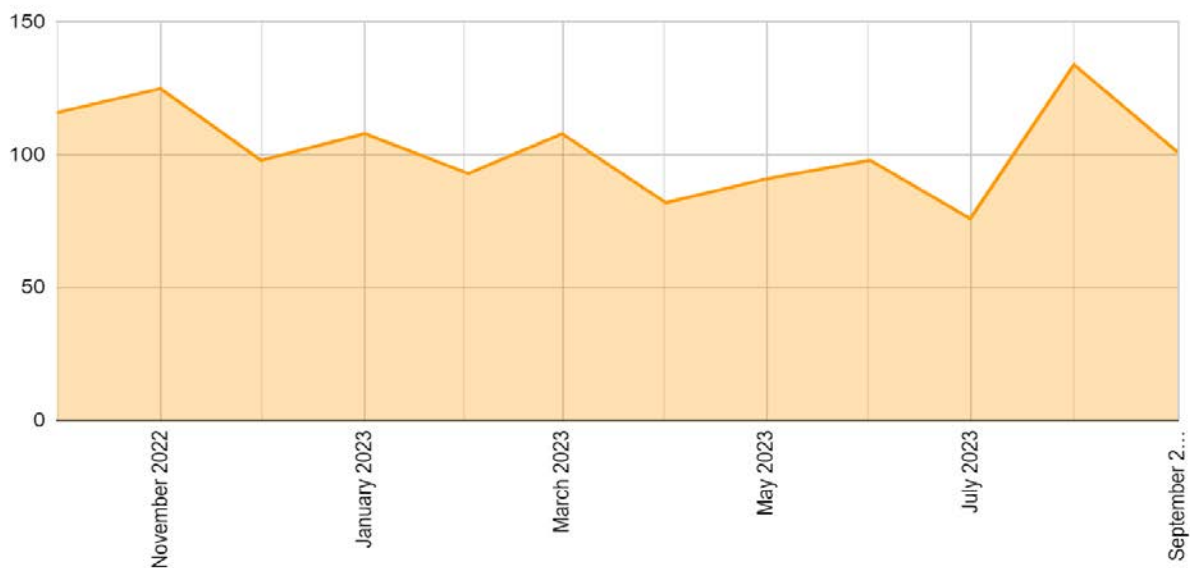
The Virtual Legal Clinic (“VLC”) is a free, over-the-phone legal service offered by the Access to Justice Office of the Utah State Bar. The program allows participants to connect with a lawyer by phone or email for up to 30 minutes about their legal issue. The volunteer lawyers are only providing legal information and brief advice. Volunteers are not providing ongoing representation. Participants sign up using the [Virtual Legal Clinic Sign Up Form](#) at [www.utahlegalhelp.org/VLC](http://www.utahlegalhelp.org/VLC).

## Participants Served

**From October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023, the Utah State Bar Access to Justice Office was able to serve 1,230 VLC participants.**

VLC averaged 102.5 participants each month with a maximum of 134 in August 2023 and a minimum of 76 in July 2023.

Requests by Month

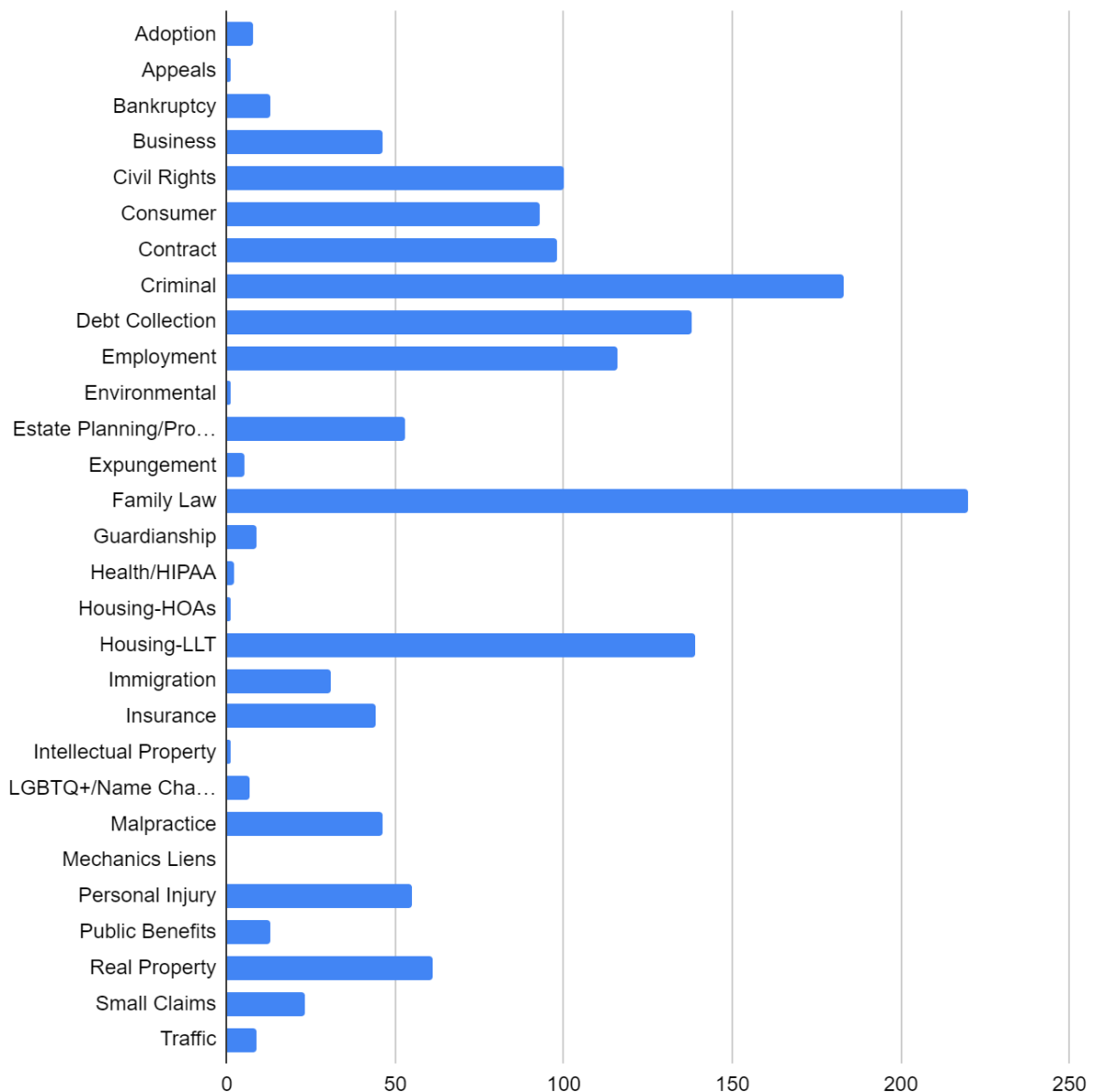


Participants can request assistance in up to 30 different practice areas: Adoption, Appeals, Bankruptcy, Business, Civil Rights, Consumer, Contract, Criminal, Debt Collection, Employment, Environmental, Estate Planning/Probate, Expungement, Family Law, Guardianship, Health/HIPAA, Housing-HOAs, Housing-Landlord Tenant (“LL/T”), Immigration, Insurance, Intellectual Property, LGBTQ+/Name Change, Malpractice, Mechanics Liens, Personal Injury, Real Property, Small Claims, Public Benefits, and Traffic.

They have the option to select as many areas as applied to their situation, so the number of requests does not equal the total number of applicants.

The top five requested legal areas for VLC remained the same from last year except requests for criminal defense moved up and Landlord Tenant moved down one spot:

1. Family (220) (last year, no. 1)
2. Criminal (183) (last year, no. 3)
3. Landlord Tenant (139) (last year, no. 2)
4. Debt Collection (138) (last year, no. 4)
5. Employment (116) (last year, no. 5)

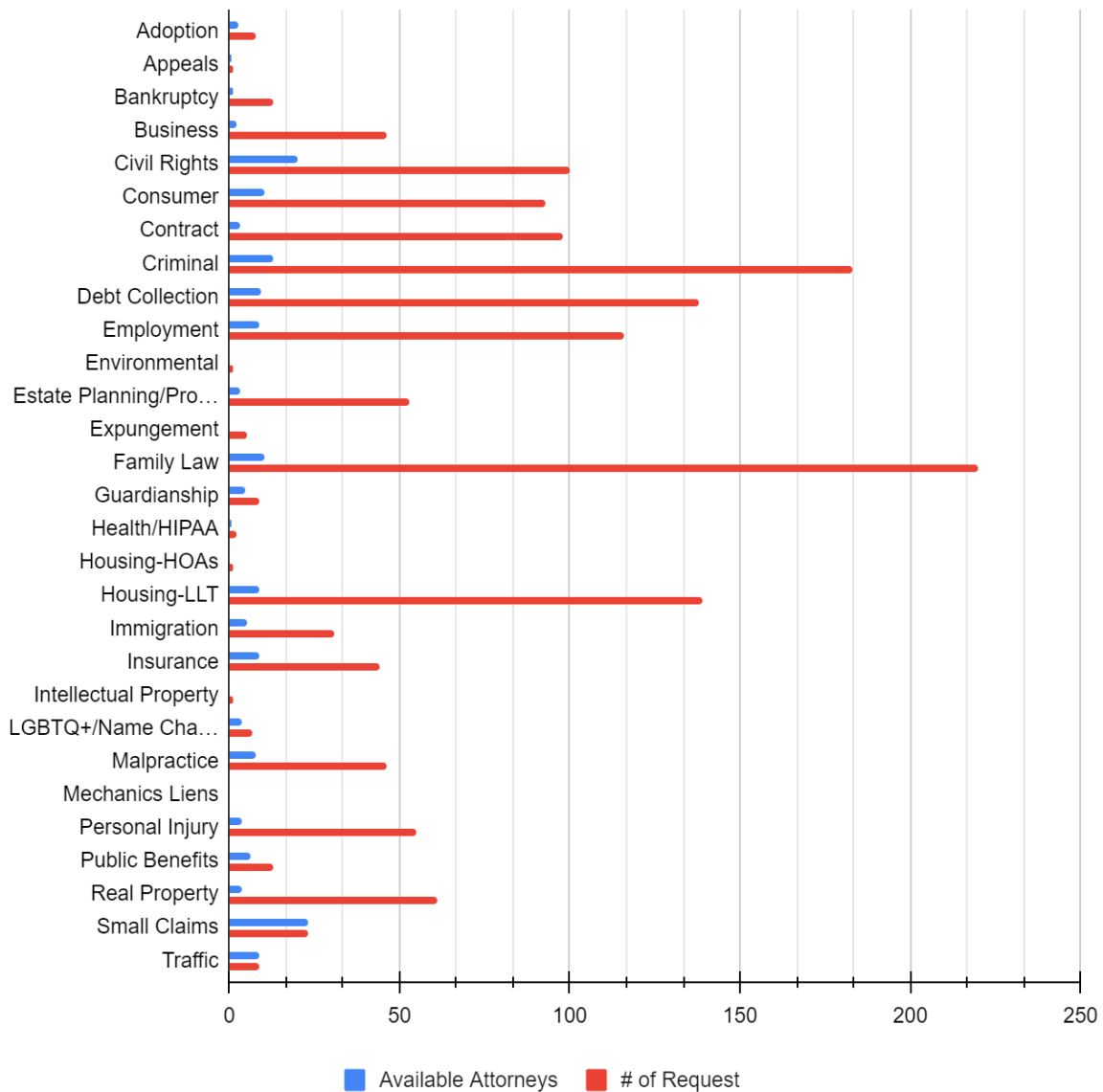


## Lawyers Serving

**From October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023, the VLC program had 74 volunteer lawyers signed up to give legal information and brief advice. Although this is only a total of 2 more than last year, there was a changeover where 9 attorneys were archived from service. Thus, there was a total gain of 11 new volunteers this year.**

VLC has sufficient volunteers to meet participant needs, however there are practice areas where more lawyers serving would help. The areas of greatest need (in order of need): small claims, civil rights, consumer/debt, criminal defense, family law, and traffic.

Number of Requests / Volunteer



These 74 volunteer legal professionals assisted 1,125 participants. This is less than the total number of people requesting help because we referred 102 applicants to other non-profit organizations and legal clinics outside of the Virtual Legal Clinic.

VLC has 28 multi-lingual attorneys who offer 10 languages including: Armenian (1), Cantonese (2), Dutch (1), Hungarian (1), Japanese (1), Mandarin (2), Mongolian (1), Norwegian (1), Portuguese (3), Russian (2), Spanish (12), and Swedish (1). However, the lawyers cover specific areas. For instance, the one Mongolian speaker only covers intellectual property. This also means that even though we have 28 multi-lingual attorneys, the immigration practice area only includes one volunteer who speaks Spanish. Thus, VLC could benefit from having more multi-lingual lawyers.

## Program Development, Findings & Recommendations

### Increasing volunteer participation.

Last year's recommendations included steps to increase volunteer participation in VLC. These steps were to (1) partner with the New Lawyer Training Program, (2) host free CLEs for volunteers in relevant practice areas, (3) visiting law firms, and (4) using social media campaigns. The Access to Justice office was partially successful in these recruiting initiatives. The office did host several free CLEs covering various areas in housing, debt collection, and protective orders. In partnership with the Pro Bono Commission recruiting team, the ATJ office is continuing to meet with law firms to discuss pro bono opportunities. Over the last year, the ATJ office provided the following:

#### 2023 CLEs

1. January 12, 2023 - Serving Your Communities: Pro Bono Opportunities (1.0 hr ethics)
2. February 23, 2023 – Divorce Essentials – How Tos and Common Issues (1.0 hr)
3. March 30, 2023 – A Shoestring Defense – Limited Scope Preparation & Evidence (1.0 hr)
4. May 17, 2023 – Cashe County Bar Pro Bono Opportunities (1.0 hr ethics)
5. June 6, 2023 – Elder Law/Guardianship CLE (1.0 hr ethics)
6. June 13, 2023 – Snell & Wilmer Pro Bono Opportunities (1.0 hr ethics)
7. July 11, 2023 – Holland & Hart Pro Bono Opportunities (1.0 hr ethics)
8. August 8, 2023 – Elder Law/Estate Planning (1.5 hr)
9. Traffic Offenses I: Defending Citations & Misdemeanors (1.0 hr)
10. August 29, 2023 – Traffic Offenses II: Felonies & DUI (1.0 hr)
11. September 19, 2023 – Crimmigration (1.0 hr)
12. September 21, 2023 – Wilson Sonsini Pro Bono Opportunities (1.0 hr ethics)

We also used the services of our Pro Bono Promoter to create opportunity and training social media spots to highlight the VLC program. Moreover, the Utah Pro Bono Opportunity Portal has been a successful way to get the word out regarding the VLC

program and was instrumental in getting increased participation by volunteers. However, the ATJ office did not maximize involvement with NLTP.

Increasing connection with volunteers and the community.

The ATJ Office is currently studying rural services and will be focusing on them in 2024. Based on this information, the ATJ office will be focusing on Rich and Wayne counties.

Counties with less than 10 active attorneys practicing:

1. **Beaver County**
  - Adamsville
  - Beaver
  - Burbank
  - Cove Fort
  - Greenville
  - Manderfield
  - Milford
  - Minersville
  - North Creek
2. **Daggett County**
  - Dutch John
  - Green Lake
  - Greendale
  - Manila
  - Red Canyon
3. **Emery County**
  - Castle Dale
  - Clawson
  - Cleveland
  - Elmo
  - Emery
  - Ferron
  - Green River
  - Huntington
  - Lawrence
  - Orangeville
4. **Garfield County**
  - Angle
  - Antimony
  - Boulder
  - Bryce
  - Bryce Canyon Cty
5. **Juab County**
  - Cannonville
  - Escalante
  - Hatch
  - Henrieville
  - Panguitch
  - Rubys Inn
  - Spry
  - Tropic
6. **Kane County**
  - Alton
  - Big Water
  - Canyon Point
  - Duck Creek
  - Glen Canyon
  - Glendale
  - Kanab
  - Mount Carmel
  - Orderville
7. **Piute County**
  - Circleville
  - Greenwich
  - Junction
  - Kingston
  - Marysville
8. **Rich County**
  - Garden City
9. **San Juan County**
  - Laketown
  - Meadowville
  - Pickleville
  - Randolph
  - Round Valley
  - Swan Creek
  - Woodruff
  - Monticello
  - Blanding
  - Bluff
  - Mexican Hat
  - La Sal
  - Montezuma Crk
  - Spanish Valley
  - Aneth
  - White Mesa
  - Navajo Mountain
  - Halls Crossing
  - Halchita
10. **Wayne County**
  - Bicknell
  - Caineville
  - Capitol Reef
  - Fremont
  - Fruita
  - Grover
  - Hanksville
  - Loa
  - Lyman
  - Teasdale
  - Torrey