In 1996, we opened our first office in Poughkeepsie and twenty five years later, have grown to a staff of 13 full-time attorneys and five support staff.

Our location is centrally located, convenient to public transportation, close to the courts and co-located with many of our community partners. Our practice areas include elder law, children’s advocacy, kinship care, family law, domestic violence, benefits, consumer debt, eviction and foreclosure prevention, and other civil matters involving clients who are disabled or vulnerable. The program is paid for in part by the City of Poughkeepsie.

In Dutchess County, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is $1,467. In order to afford this, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn $28.21 hourly. The average renter's wage in Dutchess County is $13.79. At this rate a renter must work 2.3 full time jobs to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

The mission of LSHV is to provide high quality counsel in civil matters for low-income individuals and families and other vulnerable persons who do not have access to legal representation to maintain their basic needs, and to pursue equity through dismantling systemic oppression.

LSHV works to ensure fairness in the justice system for those who can’t afford an attorney when maintaining the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and safety, are at risk.

In Dutchess County, people live in poverty; of families with female heads of households and children present live in poverty; persons in Dutchess are over age 65; more than of them live in poverty county wide, while the rate is higher in Poughkeepsie at 10.9%.

In 2021, we handled 1,605 cases, served 1,247 clients, and impacted 3,474 people.